

**The Tomb
In
The Garden**

**The First Easter
and
A Gospel of Jesus**

By

Jim Andrews

Copyright 2017-18

Parts 1 and 2 were copyrighted in 2001 as The Tomb in the Garden (but before the author understood that Part 1 is the little book of Rev 10).

INTRODUCTION

This book is divided into three parts. Part 1 is historical fiction. The early reader of this book may come to wonder, in progressing through Part 1, as to the appropriateness of the above reference to history. This will become clear in Part 2. The revelations of Part 2 are astonishing. The reader may understand, or at least suspect, at the conclusion of Part 2, that beyond astonishment is something of great value. This will be confirmed in Part 3.

Anno Domini 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1 - THE LITTLE BOOK

1. Testimony of Shimon of Schechem
2. Letter of Ruth of Cana to her sister Rachel
3. Testimony of Stephen of Capernaum
4. Testimony of Chemya of Capernaum
5. Fragment of Testimony of James Boanerges
6. Testimony of Binyamin of Jericho
7. First letter of Abibas ben Gamaliel to his sister Netanya
8. Testimony of Miriam of Magdala - Part 1
9. First Letter of Gaius Quinctilius Gravitus to his wife Cornelia
10. Testimony of Miriam of Magdala - Part 2
11. Second Letter of Abibas ben Gamaliel to his sister Netanya

12. Testimony of an Anonymous Witness
13. Testimony of Miriam of Magdala - Part 3
14. Testimony of Philip at Hierapolis
15. Second Letter of Gaius Quinctilius Gravius to his wife Cornelia
16. Letter of Miriam of Magdala to an Unknown Reader

PART 2 - SCRIPTURAL BASIS OF PART 1

1. Introduction
 2. Secret Mark and Markan Duplicates
 3. The Jigsaw Puzzle
 4. One Fragment Replacement
 5. The Complete Restoration
 6. Miscellaneous Subjects
- Appendix for Part 2
- Endnotes for Part 2
- References for Part 2

PART 3 - A GOSPEL OF JESUS

1. Who wrote the Gospel of Thomas?
2. For Whom is the Gospel Written?
3. Scriptural Allusions within the Gospel
4. Spiritual Insight and Liberation

PART 1

THE LITTLE BOOK

And the angel which I saw standing
upon the sea and upon the earth
lifted up his hand to heaven,
And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever,
who created heaven, and the things that therein are,
and the earth, and the things that therein are,
and the sea, and the things which are therein,
that there should be time no longer:

--Rev 10:5-6

1

Testimony of Shimon of Schechem

I met Yeshu at the beginning. By the Jordan. There were many people there on that day, but Yeshu was not like the others. There was something about him...something that the most ignorant peasant might see, but something that is not easy to say. It was not his garment, which was simple, nor his visage, which was common. It was something else. When he looked at people I could see that he cared about them, and when he looked at me I felt the same. But there was something else. He was a man who knew where he was going. And it seemed to me that he was the only one in those parts who did. And I knew, and I know not how I knew and yet I knew that he would somehow come to that place he was given, and he would seize his destiny. But there was something else...something that is not easy to say.

Shimon of Schechem

2

Letter of Ruth of Cana to her sister Rachel

To my dear sister Rachel,

I was at a wedding here in Cana yesterday. Our cousin Esther was married to a young man of Cana named Avrech, who is the son of Yirmeyahu. The father, as I think you know, is one of the wealthiest landlords of Cana and Avrech, his oldest son, is an upright young man who is already a pillar of the synagogue. I believe that our cousin has done very well for herself!

I know that I will see you soon when you and your husband arrive on your visit, and it is not just to tell you the above that I write this letter. It is because of someone whom I met at the wedding. His name is Yeshu, and he is a very interesting man. He spoke to me and to some of my friends at the wedding. His voice was gentle, and he was quite learned in the

holy scriptures. But while I was looking at the bride's veil (for it was of a fine oriental fabric), another man who was standing by began to dispute with Yeshu. I believe that Yeshu had said that the most important thing is to know the heavenly Father, for to know the Father is to know the will of the Father, and by so knowing we may serve His purposes more perfectly. Or he said something close to that, I think. The other man then asked Yeshu if he was saying that it is not sufficient to follow strictly the law of Moses. Yeshu said that it is not. He said that it is the will of the Father that we follow the law of Moses with our hearts rather than according to the strict letter of the law. I think that is what he said. I am afraid that I did not pay close attention as he spoke, as I was looking to see what my friends and our relatives at the feast were wearing. It was only afterwards, after what he did, that I realized that what he said was something to think about. I wish that I had paid better attention, because he left the feast soon after the amazing thing that he did, and I

may never see him again. I do not think he lives near Cana, and the only ones at the feast who seemed to know him were the four men who followed him. I believe that he is their teacher. But I wonder who invited him? I will have to ask Miriam from Nazareth, who was the wife of Joseph the carpenter. She was the hostess of the feast. But I do not think that she knows Yeshu.

But I was about to tell you what he did. As I was saying, he was speaking of the law of Moses and the will of the Father when the other man asked him if he was saying that it is not the will of Adonai that we follow strictly the law of Moses. Yeshu then began to speak of wine and wineskins. He said one does not put new wine into old wineskins. The other man then asked Yeshu if he was saying that he has new wine to offer us in place of the law of Moses. Just then Miriam came up to our group and said to Yeshu, “They have no wine.” (I think that, misunderstanding the other man, she thought that Yeshu had brought a supply of wine to the feast.) Yeshu re-

sponded in a way which surprised me because, as I have said (or meant to say), he is very well-mannered. He said to her, with his voice raised, “Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour has not yet come.” (A lot of people looked at us when he said this because, as I said, he had raised his voice.) Miriam, speaking loudly enough so that all the servants could hear, even those in the kitchen, told them, “Whatever he says to you, do it.” I did not understand this at first because I did not know that he was going to say anything to the servants. But then Yeshu asked the servants, in a voice loud enough for all of them to hear, even those just emerging from the kitchen, to fill the six stone waterpots which were there up to the brim with water. I watched the servants do it. (And so did everyone else, who continued to watch him and now also the servants as well.) They filled the waterpots with water up to the brim. Then he told the servants to draw a draught for the governor of the feast. This was Zechariah, who I think was the only person in the

room who was not paying attention at that time. One of the servants did so, and when he brought it to Zechariah our governor tasted it and said that the wine at this feast was getting better! It was unbelievable! And so funny! The man who had asked Yeshu a few moments earlier if he had new wine to offer just stood there with his mouth opened. I do not know how Yeshu did it! I have thought about it a lot, and I think that the only way he could have done such a thing would have been to have the six waterpots, which held about 20 gallons each, already almost filled to the top with wine. Or else the waterpots were empty, or nearly so, and the servants filled them with wine rather than with water. But if either of these explanations were so he would have needed to have the servants helping him. Or else the waterpots must have been specially constructed in a clever way. But none of these explanations I think are possible. The servants would not have helped him do anything. This is clear because Miriam, our hostess, had to order them to obey him. This I heard

with my own ears. Also, as I have said, I do not think he even knew any of the other guests at the feast except the four men he had himself brought. And, as I said, I do not think he knew Miriam or, if he did, they were not getting along very well that day. Anyway, after he performed this miracle I tried to remember what he had said earlier, some of which is written above. Perhaps I will remember more when you arrive.

Your sister,
Ruth

3

Testimony of Stephen of Capernaum

Yes, I was at the synagogue here in Capernaum on the day about which you inquire...Yes, I will tell you what I remember of what came to pass. I have thought about this at some length since that day.

After Tevach had spoken of what he knew concerning what our oral teachings provide by way of guidance concerning the proper way that pairs of animals are to be sacrificed, he took his seat among the congregation and Yeshu took his place at the bimah. Yeshu began to read from the sixty-first chapter of the Latter Prophet Isaiah. As I am myself better versed in this book than the others of our synagogue I can reconstruct what he read. Allow me to find my notes, which I made as he spoke...

Here we are. He said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives,

and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” And he closed the book. And the eyes of all of them that were in the synagogue fastened on him. I was myself surprised because while he had clearly read from Isaiah, what he said was not exactly what is in the scripture. But it was so close, and he read with such authority, that I could not but feel that as he read he was somehow reading from a source more accurate than my own book.

And there was in our synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, who suddenly cried out, saying, “Let me alone; what have I to do with thee, thou Yeshu of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy me? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.” And Yeshu rebuked him, saying, “Hold thy peace, and come out of him.” And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. And the people at the congregation were amazed, saying, what thing is this? For with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they

do obey him. And it was clear to all of us, from what the man with the unclean spirit had said, that he did not know Yeshu--or if he did he was very antagonistic towards Yeshu, at least that day in our synagogue. And nonetheless what the man, or the unclean spirit within him, had said confirmed what Yeshu had implied.

Your man can stop writing now, because I have finished reporting what happened that day. But what Yeshu said at that time means much to me since, as I have said, I have studied Isaiah, from whom much can be learned. You may or may not know that in Isaiah's vision of the first chapter the Lord tells us that He is full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and that He delights not in the blood of such beasts. He wants no more vain oblations, and His soul hates our new moons and appointed feasts, and He is weary thereof. He tells us instead to cease to do evil, and to learn to do well; to relieve the oppressed, ensure justice for the fatherless and plead for the widow. Your leader Yeshu,

while he lived as a man, did this. He did what he told us, when he was here in our synagogue, the Lord had sent him to do. He has indeed smitten the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he did slay the wicked while he lived, and also now, as you and the other people of your way continue his work and thereby fulfill that which was prophesied in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah. I could speak to you for a very long time concerning the many things prophesied by Isaiah which Yeshu has done. Not only the eleventh chapter speaks of Yeshu and his works, but also does the twenty-eighth and the twenty-ninth. Indeed the latter part of the twenty-ninth chapter is a paean to Yeshu, whom Isaiah calls the Holy One of Israel. And Isaiah again writes of Yeshu in the thirtieth, the thirty-second, the thirty-third, the thirty-fifth, the fortieth and the forty-first chapters. The forty-second chapter is entirely about Yeshu, as is the forty-ninth and even perhaps the fiftieth.

And so my opinion about your leader, Yeshu, is

that he is clearly the Holy One prophecied of by Isaiah, the anointed one of God, which is to us Hebrews the Messiah and is to the Greeks the Christ. As to the matter of his death and subsequent resurrection I have drawn no conclusion. Some here in Capernaum say that he led people astray with magic. I do not know of this, but I do believe that if he has led anyone astray from worldly concerns he has but led them closer to the Lord God, and if he has used worldly illusion to reveal spiritual truth the truth is nonetheless revealed. With regard to his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection I am uncertain as to whether this is exactly what Isaiah has prophecied. In the fifty-third chapter Isaiah writes that when we have made the soul of the man who is the subject of this chapter an offering for sin this man shall see his seed and he shall prolong his days. But this could be read to say that this man shall prolong his days here on earth for awhile after the crucifixion as a living man, rather than that he should ascend up into heaven soon after his resurrection, as many people of

your way believe. And other readings are also possible. For example, Isaiah does not tell us that the Holy One is the subject of this chapter. And nowhere does Isaiah tell us that the Holy One will defeat the science of the Greeks, which science seems to preclude such a thing as the physical resurrection.

Indeed, whether the Lord God has suspended the science of the Greeks to resurrect Yeshu, or whether Yeshu has defeated the world with naught but a secret maneuver, such as those used by the street magicians of Gaza when performing their illusions with their cups and their balls, is of no great import to me. For Isaiah tells me only that the Holy One will do the work of the Lord God on this earth, as Yeshu has done.

Will you stay for dinner? My wife can prepare it within the hour, and although she is young her mother has taught her well in the kitchen... Yes?... But you need no more than simple fare. Of course. Very good. A simple feast we shall have! I go to tell

my wife. Before I do, is there anything more which I can do for you? Or perhaps I should ask, is there anything more which I can do for the Lord whom you serve?

Stephen of Capernaum

4

Testimony of Chemya of Capernaum

Yes, I saw Yeshu when he was here in Capernaum at my neighbor's house on the day of which you speak, when he healed so many and cast out many demons from those possessed. I will tell you what I saw, and your assistant here can write it down if he wishes. You don't mind if I call my wife, do you? I have not yet been able to tell her the whole story. Thank you. A moment please...

My neighbor was Simon the son of Jonah. He was a fisherman until he left with Yeshu after the day about which you ask. A great crowd was here that day, and they came early. There was such a press of people that there was no room for Yeshu to receive them, not even in front of the door, and Yeshu stood in the doorway and preached to them. While he did so four men arrived carrying a bed on which lay a man who suffered from a palsy. He was shaking terribly. They could not get close to the front door at

which Jesus stood and preached, so they went around to the back of Simon's house. Using a ladder which was back there they raised the palsied man on his bed up onto the roof. Then they uncovered Simon's roof...No dear, I did not hear them ask the people in front of Yeshu to step aside...No dear...Yes dear, it would probably have been easier if they had asked the people ten times to step aside instead of what they did...Yes dear, but they tore up the roof, and what is done is done, and that is what they did to get to Yeshu...No dear, I don't know if they could have lowered the bed in front of the house where the doorway and Yeshu were...Yes dear, that would have saved Simon's roof, but that is not what they did...No dear, Simon did not try to save his roof. I saw him appear behind Yeshu in the doorway, and Yeshu turned and said something to him, and he disappeared inside the house...No dear, I don't know. Excuse me gentlemen, I was about to say that after they had broken up Simon's roof they lowered the bed down inside the house, as Yeshu disappeared in-

side. My wife here was away visiting with relatives that day and I knew that she would want to know as much as possible about what was going on, so I went up behind Simon's house, climbed the ladder, and was able to look down into the great hole in the roof. First I looked around. It was quite a sight. There were hundreds of people there, with even more coming as I watched. The Essene who follows Yeshe, in his gray hooded cloak, was bringing about a hundred people from the north, over there, and others were arriving from every direction. From the roof I could see every one of them. And every one of them could see me. It reminded me dear of when, before the play began, we stood on the stage and looked around at the audience of the Greek theater we went to with your family in Ptolemais before we were married.

As I was about to say, looking down into the house I saw that there were several scribes inside the house...No dear, I do not know if the scribes had come down all the way from Jerusalem...No dear, I do not know if they were from Tiberias...No, I do

not know what they were doing inside Simon's house, unless it was to visit with Yeshu, which seems unlikely. They were not his friends. May I continue, dear? Thank you. Dear, I am about to speak of that which must come only to the ears of men. Do you mind? Thank you dear. I'll call you back shortly...

I apologize for my wife, gentlemen. I love her greatly, but my mother's family believes that she has some Greek blood in her veins and that it doth quicken her tongue as well as her imagination. Although I doubt this, it might as well be so. But she is a good Jewish wife and I do not complain of her.

As I was about to say, just as I looked down into Simon's house Yeshu, looking on the palsied man who had come to him in through the roof, smiled. Yeshu then said, "Son, your sins be forgiven you." As soon as he said this one of the scribes began writing furiously, and all of the scribes appeared to be deeply troubled, and even angered. I believe that they were upset because only Adonai can forgive our

sins, and the words of Yeshu seemed to them to be blasphemy. Yeshu, who I think understood this, then said to them: “Why do you concern yourselves with such thoughts? Is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, ‘Your sins be forgiven you;’ or to say, ‘Arise, and take up your bed, and walk?’ But that you may know that I have power on earth to forgive sins, I say to you (speaking to the palsied man) Arise, and take up your bed, and go your way into your house.” And immediately the man arose, took up the bed, and went forth before all the people gathered about the house. And they were all amazed, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

You don’t mind if I call my wife back, do you? I have finished telling you what I saw and she will be no more bother. Thank you. A moment please...

Well, that is what came to pass. As the man left carrying his bed I saw that every person in the great crowd knew that the man carrying the bed had been the palsied man who went up and in through the roof lying on it and shaking terribly...Yes dear, he was

carrying his own bed to his own house...Because that is what Yeshu asked him to do. Well, that is all I have to say about the matter...No dear. If Yeshu comes here I will welcome him and his friends, but I will not allow anyone to tear up our roof.

Chemya of Capernaum

5

Fragment of Testimony of James Boanerges

...after the master fed the multitude with but a few loaves of bread and a few fishes, as the evening drew nigh, he told us, his disciples, that we should pass over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, to the northern coast thereof, to the land of Genneserat before unto Bethsaida. He then sent the landsmen, those of the disciples who are not wizedened in the ways of the sea, back with the luggage to the ship, telling them that he would send away the multitude. The ship of which he spake, our vessel, lay anchored in the inlet from the Sea of Galilee into the Jordan River to the south. After the landsmen departed the Master told the seamen among his disciples that after he dispersed the people he would pray awhile and then would meet us at the pier. The pier of which he spake projects northward into the Sea of Galilee from the shoreline directly eastward of the river in-

let. It is used for the lading and unlading of goods between the larger vessels which ply the Sea of Galilee and the smaller craft which ply the Jordan River. Seeing that evening was coming on and seeing that the Master was weary, I and the other seamen implored him to rest and pray while we dispersed the multitude. He thanked us and departed up onto a hill nearby, to the south of us, to pray. I and the other seamen then dispersed the multitude and thereafter, returning to the ship, we joined the landsmen therein.

We told the landsmen that the Master was praying upon a high place and would soon join us. Feeling a rising wind, we seamen stowed the topside gear and examined the oars, which we would soon need. For the wind was a north wind, and it lay against us in our northward passage. I, being with good eyes and being the most experienced with the tiller, manned it from the topdeck at the stern of the vessel while the other seamen raised anchor and took up oars on the maindeck. The landsmen sat amidship on the main-

deck. Rowing against the rising wind, we brought the ship north out of the river inlet and into the Sea of Galilee as the light began to fail. Looking to starboard I saw the Master, in his white linen cloth, waiting alone on the shore before the foot of the pier. I noted that the north wind had piled up the waters of the Sea of Galilee against the southern coastline, so that the pier was somewhat beneath the water. I scanned closely ahead and to starboard, searching for the stick which protrudes upward from the pier at its extreme northern tip, at its northwest corner, and I found it, with my good eyes, even in the failing light and the commencing rain. Since the beams which support the pier do not extend above its surface this stick is the device by which pilots of vessels such as mine, in a high sea with the pier beneath the water, may spot its northwest corner and so not bash the pier with their vessels. As I was finding the stick the other seamen toiled in rowing, for the wind against us rose further. I steered the ship closer to the pier as we approached the stick. The Master walked out

onto the pier, coming from behind us, and he would have continued to the end of the pier had not the landsmen, nearly as one, cried out as though in pain. The Master and I looked to the landsmen. They, looking at him, were distressed, with their faces drawn in sundry fashion. The Master, seeing their unease, stopped on the pier and called to them “Be of good cheer: It is I; be not afraid.” Methinks the Master felt they were afeared. (I say this for the reason that he said unto them “Be of good cheer; be not afraid.”) Methinks as well the Master felt they were afeared for the reason that, in the night and in the rain, they did not recognize him coming to them on the pier and thought instead that a stranger approached. (I say this for the reason that he said unto them “It is I.”) I for my part felt and yet feel that they were become seasick. As the ship drew nigh unto the stick I called for the starboard oarsmen to draw in oars, that they not strike the pier, the stick or the Master. They did so while I held the tiller to port so that the ship would pivot but a little to starboard

as it cleared stick and pier. The Master came up unto us and into the ship as we cleared.

Straightway upon boarding he came astern to the pillow which was there, lay himself down and fell asleep. I did not see him lay down and fall asleep, for the pillow on which he slept was nearly beneath me on the maindeck, but I knew that he was weary and would quickly fall asleep. He was a seaman also and would not be troubled by the heaving of the vessel. Straightway after the Master came aboard the wind rose further, and the rain increased. We soon perceived that a great storm had come upon us, and the waves began to beat into the ship, and it began to fill. I and the other seamen were intent upon our work, for we had much to do. Forsooth we had too much to do, for the ship, filling with water, would soon sink and we all perish, should we not somehow be saved. Then, of a sudden, the storm brake. Greatly relieved, I called to Andrew, who is another seaman, to take the tiller. He sprang to and, after passing the tiller, I crawled afore on the

topdeck to see if the Master still slept. I was pleased to know that the landsmen would be no more seasick. Looking down onto the maindeck I saw that the Master was awake and arisen from the pillow. The landsmen lay about him with their faces pressed against the deck. He, standing in their midst, looked northwards and upwards to the brightest point of the clearing sky. Just then the moon revealed itself, bathing the ship in beauty. The oarsmen, one by one, stopped rowing and looked at him standing thus before them, with the landsmen at his feet. He, seeing their growing amazement, called to them cheerfully, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" And the wind ceased. And the sea became calm. And I understood. The landsmen had awakened the Master and he had commanded the wind and the sea to come to peace and be still before the storm brake, and the landsmen, seeing this, were utterly amazed; and for this reason they did prostrate themselves before him.

James Boanerges
son of Zebedee

6

Testimony of Binyamin of Jericho

May I trouble you good gentlemen for a small...thank you, sirs. My needs are simple, and a denarius is a great help to an old lame man such as...Yes, good sirs. I did see the Yeshu of whom you inquire when he last passed on this road about ten weeks ago, which was but a few days before the last Passover. I saw him as he left Jericho through the gate here, as he departed on his last trip into Jerusalem. The Roman swine crucified him, I heard. I was afraid that they would. But I also heard someone say that Yeshu came back afterwards...What? You know people to whom he spoke?... After he was killed by the Romans?...Well, I don't know what to say. I can see that you speak the truth...But you want me to tell you what I saw...And you are writing it down. Well, I am honored. Anyway, this is what happened:

On that day about midmorning I was sitting here

behind my begging bowl wondering if I would have money for enough food in the evening. Only two people had noticed me and my cup all morning.

Most people traveling this road don't even see a beggar such as me sitting here. I think that all that they see as they pass is the destination towards which they have set their faces and their hearts.

Most people live in their dreams, I think. Since the wall fell on my leg I have had no dreams, and so I have had time to notice people. But not many people have time to notice me. As I sat here I saw a large group of people approaching from inside the city. They were on their way to Jerusalem for Passover, I think. As the crowd was passing I noticed that there was another beggar sitting by the road a few yards to the west--over there. He was blind. As Yeshu passed him in the midst of the crowd he called out "Yeshu, thou son of David, have mercy on me." When he said this some of the people in the crowd looked at him. For by calling Yeshu "son of David" he was saying that Yeshu was the

Messiah whom our people hereabouts await, the leader who will unite us to throw the Romans into the sea. And so a few of the people gestured that he should hold his peace, for what he said was dangerous to Yeshu. But he cried the more a great deal “thou son of David, have mercy on me.” I saw that quite a few people in the passing crowd were then looking at him. The crowd stopped moving. Yeshu, who was about fifteen yards beyond him, to the west, over there, had also stopped. Yeshu said something to those around him and they then called the blind man, saying “Be of good comfort, rise. He has called you.” The blind man then rose, cast away his garment, and came towards Yeshu. He was naked, and he moved cautiously towards the voices which had called him, with his arms outstretched before him. As he slowly approached Yeshu I noticed that all of the pilgrims on the road to the west had stopped and turned around and were watching. Mothers of small children clasped them close to their bosoms while shielding their small heads, each with

a free hand, from the sight. Parents of the larger children stood close together before them, blocking the youngsters with their bodies from the naked man on the road in the midmorning sun. I could see the heads of the larger children bobbing up behind the shoulders of their parents as the youngsters jumped up and down behind them, trying to see what was happening. The blind man came to Yeshu, who then asked him “What do you want that I should do to you?” The blind man responded “Lord, that I might receive my sight.” Yeshu then said “Go your way. Your faith has made you whole.” Immediately the blind man received his sight. With everyone on the road watching he returned to his garment, finding it with no difficulty now that he could see. He covered himself with it and followed Yeshu in the way toward Jerusalem, as the crowd began moving west again, with everyone therein having witnessed this miracle. Well, everyone except the children had witnessed it. But I think that some of the more resourceful of the larger children may also have man-

aged to do so.

Binyamin

7

First Letter of Abibas ben Gamaliel to his sister Netanya

My Dear sister Netanya,

I am pleased to hear that you and your young lawyer have settled comfortably into your new home. Tyre is a pleasant place to live. I wish sometimes that I lived there rather than here. Jerusalem is so boring. It has a lot of history, but for Jerusalem history has stopped, I think.

Our father has gotten me a good job at the temple. I now hold a bird concession in the courtyard. We sold over 5000 birds to pilgrims just during the last week, so the money really does come in. I have hired a Herodionite who had some bad luck with his own business to manage my booths, so I don't even have to go to work every day. Father has counseled me to keep a close eye on the accounts, however, and I think that is good advice.

Netanya, you and I are very fortunate to have such a father. He is I think the most capable of the priests at the temple. If he were a Saducee he would have already been made high priest, I think. It seems unfair that he is barred from the highest office, for he knows much more than the letter of Torah.

Father took me to an interesting meeting in the temple yesterday. There is a rural preacher here who came into Jerusalem a few days ago. He has been stirring up the country bumpkins against the temple authorities and the temple leadership has been on the lookout for him for some time. He knocked over some tables and a couple of booths, one of which was mine, in the temple courtyard a few days ago, in fact. By the time my Herodionite and his helpers got things straightened out some of my money had disappeared. Well, yesterday one of the followers of this miscreant (who is called, most inappropriately, Yeshu) came in and offered to lead the temple guard and the Romans to him. A quick meeting of the priests was convened, and Father let me come along

as his assistant.

The unhappy follower of Yeshu who met with us called himself Iscariot. He doesn't look as though he would fit in very well with the Galilean crowd that follows Yeshu. Iscariot doesn't even look Semitic. He has a full red beard and red hair. Although he has broken with Yeshu and is willing to deliver him to us, he didn't tell us why he will do this.

When Caiaphas, who as you probably know is the high priest, asked him this question he responded curtly that the problem of himself and Yeshu is not the business of Caiaphas. Caiaphas then dropped the subject. Iscariot insisted that we take only Yeshu, and no one else. He said that Yeshu's followers were nothing without him. Caiaphas responded that he already knows this and that he has no interest in anyone except Yeshu. Iscariot then said that he had reason to believe that Yeshu will be in Jerusalem on the night of Passover. He said that he will meet us at the sheep gate to the temple late in the evening, after the seder, and will take us to Yeshu. He said that

since the residents will be indoors at this time there will be little chance of interference by local residents who might be sympathetic to Yeshu. Iscariot then said that he will identify Yeshu for us by kissing him. Caiaphas asked him if he was not concerned that the people with Yeshu will see who has betrayed their leader. Iscariot said that he will be wearing a hooded cloak. Then one of the older priests, Annaias, who is the father-in-law of Caiaphas, asked Iscariot if any of Yeshu's people would try to resist us with arms. Iscariot responded that Yeshu teaches his followers to renounce violence. Annaias then said that Iscariot had not answered his question. He said that he had not asked Iscariot what Yeshu teaches, but rather he had asked if any of the band would try to resist us with arms. He asked if any of Yeshu's people carried arms. Iscariot answered simply that Yeshu teaches his people to avoid armed conflict. He then got up to leave. Caiaphas then said that he was grateful for Iscariot's assistance, and he asked if Iscariot needed any money to compensate him for

helping us. Iscariot hesitated a moment and then he suggested that thirty pieces of silver would be appropriate. Caiaphas promised to pay him this sum if the plan succeeds. Iscariot then left.

After he left it occurred to me that Iscariot never did guarantee that Yeshu's people will be unarmed. Nor did he tell us why he will betray Yeshu. And he is clearly not doing it for the money. I don't trust this man, Netanya. I will write you again soon to tell you how things turn out tomorrow night after we have taken Yeshu, or at least try to do so.

Abibas ben Gamaliel

8

Testimony of Miriam of Magdala - Part 1

Yes sir. I will tell you what happened to me and to the Master a few days ago, on the evening of Passover and the next day. I know that what I saw is not the same thing that other people saw, and I can not explain this. But I will tell you what I saw, or what I think I saw. Please give me a minute, for I must decide where to begin...

I and the others had a rather brief Passover meal at our camp east of the Mount of Olives. It was not a joyous seder for me. I was concerned about Mother. The Master called my friend Miriam “Mother,” which was appropriate. This is the Miriam who is also the Mother of James and of Joses. Mother was very tense, and those of us who knew her well could see this. I kept thinking how different she was last year, before Passover, when she, and all of us, were in such a joyful mood. You may know that Mother

is clever at cutting hair and that she often did this for the others of us. I remember that last year, before Passover, when she began to help me with my own hair she had asked me if I wanted to look like an Egyptian princess. I declined of course. Anyway, things were very different this year. All of us were uneasy, I think. But we celebrated the seder as best we could. Afterwards Mother got up and went over to the road which leads from Bethany, to the east, into Jerusalem, to the west. I watched her and saw that she joined someone, whom I could hardly see in the night, who was going west on the road. They continued west together.

A few minutes thereafter our lookout on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives signaled with her lantern that the Master was approaching on the road from Bethany with friends. I and the others got up to receive him. The Master and the disciples who were with him greeted us briefly, and I thought somberly, as they arrived, and they continued west on the Jerusalem road. Salome indicated that I and

the others should follow them.

As we followed I watched the others on this silent procession on the night of Passover to an unknown place for a purpose which had not been revealed to us. I saw no sign of discontent and heard no grumbling. Nor did I expect any. You may or may not know that the Master had saved each of us, one by one, from lives which were hardly worth living. I myself had lost my natural parents when I was very young and I had lived with another family. The most dreadful things happened to me as I grew up--things too terrible to speak of. When I met the Master he changed everything. He loved me. My demons fled before his love, and he brought me to our heavenly Father. To leave my home and follow him when he left Magdala was an easy thing to do. And it was the same with the others.

When we arrived at the garden of Gethsemane the Master and the disciples with him stopped, and Salome told us to wait. We waited for what seemed a long time. Then I was somewhat relieved when

Mother joined the rest of us. She came up to Gethsemane along a path which leads down to the Brook Kidron. But she was still tense. She sat down apart from the rest of us, looking in another direction, and I could see that she did not wish to be disturbed. I continued waiting for a short while and then, feeling that there might be trouble, I moved around to the south of the clearing where the Master was praying and the other disciples waited. I thought that if the Master came into danger he might retreat to his hideout in the tombs to the south. I wanted to be in a position to help him if he needed help in getting away. And then I waited...

Miriam of Magdala

9

First letter of Gaius Quinctilius Gravi- tus to his wife Cornelia

My dear wife Cornelia,

I will be back in Rome, I believe, by June. I now have only a few weeks of duty remaining in this cesspool. I look forward very much to relaxing with you and our sons until, as is my hope, my transfer to Catullus receives Legion approval. Then all of us can sail to Massilia. You will love it there. Southern Gaul is nothing like Judea and Massilia nothing like Jerusalem, and I will not mind having you and the boys with me there.

There was more trouble here this last week. Another crazy Jew. This one thinks he is the son of a Palestinian king who died about a thousand years ago. I am sure that you laugh to hear this, but I tell you in truth this is the kind of thing which the people around here take seriously. We had gotten orders

from Pilate some time ago to take in this character before he makes more trouble. The Romans here call him “Jesus.” I am unable to say his name in the Semitic tongue (except accidentally, I have found, while sneezing). Pilate, who is back from Caesarea, alerted us when this fellow showed up here in Jerusalem about a week before “passover.” This is a great religious holiday here because it is the anniversary of a day, the Jews think, that their national god murdered everybody who wasn’t a Hebrew. This happened a long time ago of course. But there is always trouble here at “passover.” They are hoping I think that their god will do it again. And they would gladly die to help him do it, of course.

Some of them do die here every year at “passover.” That is when these people are the craziest. But Pilate keeps the lid on the pot here. He is an excellent provincial governor--hard as nails, but a man like him saves lives in the long run.

My command at the Antonia got the word the day before yesterday that we would be able to pick up

Jesus after nightfall of the next day. (This was last night, which was the night of “passover,” which I explained above.) Pilate first informed me of this privately in his headquarters. He told me that our spotter would be one of the Jesus people, a man named Iscariot, who would meet me and my men after dark at the sheep gate. (This is a gate in the northeast wall of the temple courtyard.) Pilate told me that Iscariot has red hair, but I might not be able to see this because he will be wearing a hooded cloak. After our private meeting Pilate spoke to the assembled men of my command about the coming operation. Pilate specified that we were to wear our civilian clothes, preferably any clothing of the local style which we have managed to acquire during our tour of duty here in Palestine. The point was, and he made this very clear to us, that the operation was to look like a local job. Pilate said that to this end some of the temple Jews would meet us at the sheep gate and would go out with us to pick up Jesus. Pilate told us that the people of this province cannot

face the fact that they have lost the national independence of their ancestors, of which their holy books remind them. If we are sage, Pilate said, we will not remind them of this, or half of us may perish in the war which we set off by so doing. We were to look and act like Jews as much as possible.

Yesterday, after dark, I and my men met the temple people at the sheep gate, as planned. The local constabulary had turned out. Almost all the other Jews were gray or white in the beard, I noted. We gave each of them a sword or a stave, or a lantern or torch if they were very old. A few minutes after we had finished distributing the weapons Iscariot showed up, wearing a black hooded cloak. Pilate had also told me in our private conversation that Iscariot would mark Jesus for us by kissing him. In a final comment Pilate had told me that he would hold me personally responsible that we take the right man. He said that if we bring in an Idumaeen grain merchant then I can forget about Massilia. (This truly happened last year with the other centurion--the

one who took his life in the bath, as I explained in an earlier letter.) I did not ask Pilate what else I could forget about, for in truth I did not wish to know. But I did make a mental note to be very sure that we pick up the man whom Iscariot spots for us.

I then marched the men out the sheep gate, following our spotter around to the eastern side of the temple mount, while the temple people tagged along with us. Some of the auxiliary troops at the rear of our formation began jesting, as we continued east, concerning the graybeards from the temple with the weapons we had given them. They did in truth look comedic. But I gave my own comedians a hard glare. They knew what that meant, and they cut the levity. We soon came to the area where, by Iscariot's slowing pace, I understood we would soon find Jesus--the garden called Gethsemane. This garden is on a beeline east from the temple to the eastern exit from Jerusalem. As we approached I noted that if Jesus was a swift runner then Gethsemane was as safe a place in Jerusalem as there was for him. He

was almost out the door, in a way of speaking, although at the very same place he was only a short run from Solomon's porch on the east side of the temple. I understood how this fellow had given the local constabulary the slip from Solomon's porch a few months earlier. He had simply run east to and through Gethsemane and out towards Bethany. I concluded that, crazy or not, this one was a clever one. My greatest concern was that he would give us the slip and head straight east. I wasn't sure that we could stop him if he did.

There were a few men in a clearing in the garden as we approached, and most of these looked like vagrants and seemed to have been asleep. There were more people, most of them women, behind them. One man, in a white linen cloth, was standing in front of the others, and he advanced a bit more westward towards us as we, following a few paces behind Iscariot, approached him. Another man, in dark clothes, stood a few paces to the north of the man in the white linen. This second man was almost

directly opposite me, as I was at the left front of our formation. Dark clothes looked like trouble to my soldier's eye. It was the way he stood, perhaps. No matter--one comes to sense such things in time when in the service of the Emperor. Iscariot made a gesture for me to hold my men, and I gave the order. We stopped, and Iscariot walked toward the man in white linen. As he did so I realized that the people in the clearing at that moment were the band of this fellow Jesus, and it surprised me. They looked more pathetic than dangerous. Then I kept my eye on the man in the white linen cloth as Iscariot, in his black hooded cloak, approached, embraced, and kissed him.

Then, from the left, dark clothes sprang at me with a sword. He moved swiftly to my right as it flashed in the night, reflecting the lights of the lanterns. It flicked out at something and then he fled east, back through the garden, towards the eastern exit I had noted earlier. He came almost directly into my line of vision as he fled and as I kept my eye on Jesus.

None of my men went after him, as I did not give the order to pursue, and none requested leave to do so. He got a good head start before any of us could respond to what was happening. One moment he was immobile, the next a threat to all of us, and the next he was fleeing for his life.

I wrote above that he sprang at me, but in truth he sprang at all of us. My men, surprised, fell back a bit for a moment. I, being an older and more experienced soldier, kept my attention on my job, and I kept my eye on Jesus, the man Iscariot had spotted for us.

Immediately after the swordplay began I noted that Jesus, in the white linen cloth, had stepped back slightly from Iscariot, in the black hooded cloak. For I was keeping my eye on him. I was able to note however, in the corner of my eye, how well dark clothes handled the blade before he fled. He was in truth the only Jew I ever saw who knew what a sword is. And this I saw from the corner of my eye, for I kept my eye on Jesus the whole time, as I have

said.

Jesus then gave a speech. He spoke to our formation, for he faced us as he spoke, while his own people were behind him. I do not understand the Semitic tongue and I do not know what he said, but I recognized the dialect. It is the most revolting sound in the Empire. When I hear the peasants from Galilee speak their version of the Semitic tongue it sounds like they have olives stuck in their throats. The speech of Jesus was short, which was good. It sounded like he had an olive stuck in his throat. I kept my eye on him while he spoke. Then I gave the order and my men took him. I came up, laid my hand on his shoulder, and only then did I look around. I was searching for Iscariot. I had the feeling that we had been double-crossed or set up in some way. I wanted to ask Iscariot about this with my dagger behind his scrotum. (I have found this the most effective way to interrogate the Jews here.) But I could not find him in the darkness. Instead I saw some of the women running. (This began I

think as my men laid hands on Jesus, while I was still keeping my eye on him.) I ordered four of my men to hold Jesus and gave the others leave to chase the women. I knew this is what they wanted to do, and we had our man, so the job was done properly, and they deserved a portion of recreation. (The Antonia by the temple is the hardest station in the empire, and it is small privileges such as this which the men appreciate. And this builds morale, which strengthens the Empire in the end.) The women scattered like chickens. I caught sight of several men running as well. I noted that they ran in general faster than did the women. I was at that moment struck by the truth of the adage of Alexander, that to take the heart of the enemy is everything. This band collapsed when we took its leader. I called my men back and we brought Jesus in.

Later I learned that what dark clothes did with the sword, while I was keeping my eye on Jesus, was to lop off an ear of one Malchus, an old servant of the high priest. It amused me that before he lost his

nerve dark clothes attacked the least formidable person in our formation. And at that he merely lopped off an ear. But there is more that I must tell you. It turns out that old Malchus was deaf in that ear. This morning at mess he came in for awhile. Malchus knows Latin, and although he did not eat our food he conversed with us. My men began chiding him about his ear. One of them asked him how he could hear now, and he said he believed that he could hear a little better. Then he looked around at us as we laughed, carrying a straight face, as though he did not understand why we were laughing. I will say one thing, and only one, that I sometimes enjoy about these people. Some of them, and I do not say all of them, but some of them have a remarkable sense of humor.

Gaius Quinctilius Gravitas

10

Testimony of Miriam of Magdala - Part 2

...I waited south of the clearing in Gethsemane for a few minutes. The Master had gone forward to the west of the disciples a short distance, to pray. The disciples fell asleep while he was praying. I could have not fallen asleep myself even if I had tried. I was too tense. The Master looked to the south once and saw me. He smiled at me, understanding my intention in being there and sensing my concern. He smiled at me I knew to reassure me, but I could see that he was also troubled.

The Master had gone back to the sleeping disciples when I heard people approaching from the west. A large group of what I think were priests and their servants appeared on the north side of the temple. They approached Gethsemane. They were carrying lanterns, torches and weapons. I thought that the Master would flee, as we all knew that Pilate and the

temple people who worked with him wanted to kill the Master. But he did not flee. He moved forward about a stone's throw west of the disciples. I moved more to the west also, so as to stay on a line between the Master and his hideout to the south. This, as you may know, is an unused tomb in the cemetery. A man in a black, or perhaps gray, hooded cloak, who I think was Judas, led the temple crowd to within a few yards of the Master. The temple people then stopped but Judas, I think, continued forward to meet the Master. He embraced and kissed him. Then another disciple, whom I had not noticed before in the darkness of the night, attacked the temple priests with a sword. I was surprised, shocked, ashamed and afraid, all at the same time. Every one of the Master's followers knew better than that, I had thought. I hid my face in my hands, for I could not bear to watch. Suddenly my nerves gave way and I began sobbing. I felt that something terrible was about to happen and I felt that there was nothing at all that I could do to stop it. Then I heard people

running, and I looked up. The people from the temple with the weapons were chasing our own people, in every direction, I thought. Then, just before me, I saw the Master approaching. He was unmistakable in his white linen cloth, even in the night and amidst the running people. I believe that he was angered. I got up as he approached and I ran alongside him as he walked swiftly to the south, towards his hideout, as I had anticipated. Every so often I looked back to see if anyone followed us. I saw no one. Soon we arrived at the unused tomb. The Master, looking at me, placed his finger to his lips and then entered the tomb, lying down therein. I followed him in but, just before drawing my head into the tomb, I saw a young man. Someone had been following us. He was one of the temple people and as he approached he looked at me with murder in his eyes. I went out quickly and fled from the tomb, running south, and thinking that the man would follow me. Then I heard voices calling out behind me. I looked over my shoulder as I ran, and I saw that no one was fol-

lowing me at all. I kept running, because I was afraid. But I was also ashamed, because I had run away and left the Master behind in the tomb. I was afraid that the temple people had trapped him in it, and I knew that they wanted to kill him.

I ran all the way back to our camp, trying to decide as I ran what I should say to the others. The sign which the Master made before he entered the tomb meant that I should tell no one where he was. But he was in great danger. I did not know what to do.

When I arrived at the camp I heard the others saying that the temple priests had captured the Master in the clearing before they began chasing us. I knew that this was not true, but I did not know if I should say so. The Master had told me to be silent. I said nothing to any of the men, for I was afraid that it might be a mistake to do so. But I was also afraid that it might be a mistake not to say anything to the others. Trembling and confused, I knelt down by the road at the edge of our camp, looking west towards Gethsemane. I spent the rest of Passover night there,

praying and looking west into the blackness, hoping every moment to see the white linen cloth of the Master emerging from the night. But he did not come. I watched and prayed until, looking behind me, I could barely see the faint light of the coming day. Then I got up and began walking, and then running, back to the tomb. As the eastern sky brightened behind me, I raced west on Jerusalem road.

Miriam of Magdala

11

Second Letter of Abibas ben Gamaliel to his sister Netanya

My Dear sister Netanya,

As I promised to do in my last letter I am writing to tell you what happened a couple of days ago on the night of Passover, when we went out to capture Yeshu. It was quite an experience for me.

It began in a disappointing way. After the seder I asked Father if he was ready to go to the sheep gate to meet Iscariot. (As I believe I mentioned in my last letter Iscariot had promised to lead us to Yeshu at that time.) Father asked me to tell the others that he was not feeling well and would stay at home. I was dismayed to hear this because it was expected of all of us to turn out in support of Caiaphas in this matter, and I was concerned that Father might lose face with the other priests if he did not come. But I have learned not to argue with Father, since he al-

ways wins, and I did not question his decision to stay home. I went out and joined the others at the sheep gate.

A good number of my friends were there--all of them sons of the temple priests and of the lesser temple officials. There were also quite a few Roman soldiers, dressed very badly in local attire. The temple guard had also turned out. I did not see any of the temple priests, but the male servants of I think all of them were there.

Iscariot showed up after awhile, disguised in a black hooded cloak. Then Iscariot led us to Yeshu, as he had promised. We caught Yeshu by surprise at a clearing in the garden of Gethsemane. Iscariot just walked right up to him and kissed him. Then one of Yeshu's people attacked us with a sword. He soon lost his nerve however and ran away. But I remembered how Iscariot had avoided answering Annaias's question as to whether any of Yeshu's people were armed. I watched Iscariot as Yeshu said something stupid to us, in his coarse lower Galilean accent,

about why we were bothering him now rather than before when he was in the temple. Iscariot began walking slowly to the south as Yeshu spoke, but I did not lose sight of him. I looked quickly at Yeshu a couple of times as he spoke, but it was hard to see his face in the dark, as he was somewhat beyond the lights of our torches and lanterns. Then I had to watch only Iscariot, as it was becoming hard to see him as he continued moving south, in his black hooded cloak, into the night. After the Romans seized Yeshu the troops began chasing his followers, most of whom were women. I went after Iscariot.

I caught up with him just short of the edge of the clearing. I grasped the back of his cloak to stop him, but he slipped out of it and kept going. Just then I got hit from the side by someone running. I think it was one of the women, who was looking behind her as she fled from a soldier and who didn't see me. Since she didn't see me she ran full tilt into me, and she just knocked me flat. I ended up on my back. Rising as quickly as I could, and after regaining my

breath, which had been knocked out of me, I looked for Iscariot. He had disappeared into the garden south of the clearing. But I knew in which direction he had been headed, and I took off in that direction. As I ran south I called to my friends “Let’s get Iscariot,” and some of them began following me. I moved as fast and as straight as I could through the olive trees. After a short time I caught a glimpse of white through some shrubbery ahead. Slowing down a bit, I saw a peasant woman going into a tomb in the cemetery. She saw me coming and fled. As I approached the tomb a man began to emerge from it. I stopped and called over my shoulder to my friends behind me, “Here he is!” Then I turned to face the man, and my heart sank. The man was not Iscariot. He did not have a red beard. But there was something else which disconcerted me. It was the way he looked at me. There was something in his eyes...something inappropriate. Anyway, the spirit of the chase left me. I looked down from his face. Then one of my friends arrived and got him by

the shoulder. Another arrived and got a hand on his waist. Suddenly he left the linen cloth he was wearing and fled from us naked, leaving my friends holding the cloth. They dropped it and followed him south. I called after them, "It's not Iscariot," but they continued to chase him anyway, just for the fun of it, I think. One of them got him by the leg, but he pulled free and kept going. Then another got an arm around him, but he twisted free and continued running. I watched him and my friends as they disappeared south into the tombs. After awhile the sounds of the chase grew faint, and I sat down there by the tomb, trying to understand why I felt so low. After awhile I heard a call from the north, "We got him." Somehow the man whom I had mistaken for Iscariot had slipped around us to the north before he was caught--or so I thought at the time. I called to my friends "We got him," and I heard some of them relaying the call to the others south of me. I and the others then returned to our homes. We didn't talk at all as we left the cemetery. I didn't say anything

myself because, as I have said, I was bothered by the way the man in the white linen had looked at me.

When I returned home I saw a light in Father's study. I knocked and father bade me enter. He was standing by the window in his nightclothes, looking out the window. Father did not seem to be ill, I thought. But he did seem troubled. He had apparently gotten up from bed and had been trying to figure out some legal problem. Father didn't look at me as I entered. He just continued looking out the window.

I told Father that I was bothered about going out on the night of Passover to help the Romans take in Yeshu, whom they would surely crucify. I told Father I was concerned that someone might be able to accuse me of breaking the law of Moses. Father said "Who would accuse you?" I felt better when he said this, for I knew that the temple priests had sent their servants out to do the very same thing that I had done, and so there was no one important who could accuse me. Then I told Father that what bothered

me was not that I had helped the Romans take Yeshu, who surely deserved to be crucified, for he had turned over the booths in the temple courtyard, which was an affront to Adonai. What bothered me was that Iscariot had set the thing up so that we all went out on the very night of Passover to help the Romans take one of our own. I asked Father if he thought that by so doing Iscariot had made hypocrites of us all. Father's body swayed a little. Then he said "No man is made a hypocrite by the deeds of another." Not wishing to bother him further, as I understood that he was indeed not feeling well, I bade him goodnight and went to bed. As I lay in bed I felt better for having heard Father's opinion that what Iscariot had led us to do was his fault, and not ours. And then I realized that earlier, in the tombs, I had misunderstood the call "We got him," which came from the north rather than the south. I had thought at the time that the man who had been taken was the man whom I had earlier thought was Iscariot. But it wasn't him at all. The man who had been

taken was Yeshu. Father has often told me, as you know, that I jump too easily to conclusions. And he is right. He is always right.

I slept through the entire next day and completely missed the crucifixion of Yeshu.

Abibas ben Gamaliel

12

Testimony of an Anonymous Witness

Yea, I was here in the Kidron Valley on the night that your lord Yeshu was here. And I will tell you that which ye do list. But I adjure you do not use my name, for I crave not the attention of the Romans or their minions back yonder on temple mount. And I warn you that it was a most disturbing thing which I did see. So weigh this before ye bid me proceed...Very well, but ye have been warned.

My home is here, on the western slope of the valley, so that looking out through my doorway here I can see the tombs on the eastern side of the valley, across the Brook Kidron, which is just down there. On the night of which ye inquire, when Yeshu arrived immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. He had his dwelling among the tombs (for I had seen him before entering and leaving his dwelling there); and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had

been bound before with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him (for his hands and fingers were bloody), and the fetters broken in pieces (for the fetters, being of linen cloth bound tight about his wrists, were ragged at the ends where he had broken them, and they flapped as he ran). Neither could any man tame him. (For I had seen other men try to hold him, and no man could do so.) And for what seemed forever he was in the tombs, and in the hills above, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

And then Yeshu came. (I knew it was Yeshu for he was clothed in a long white garment.) When the man with the unclean spirit saw Yeshu afar off, he ran and worshipped him. And he cried with a loud voice and said “What have we to do with thee, Yeshu, thou son of the most high God? We adjure thee by God, that thou torment us not.” For Yeshu said unto him “Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.” And Yeshu asked him “What is thy name?” And he answered, saying “My name is Legion, for

we are many.” And he besought Yeshu much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was away in the mountains by the sea to the east a great herd of swine feeding, the legion of demons did tell Yeshu. And all the devils besought Yeshu, saying “Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.” And forthwith Yeshu gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and Yeshu did tell the man that the herd then ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, Yeshu did tell him.

And I and my neighbors went out to see what it was that was done. And we came to Yeshu, and did see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind, and we were afraid. And others came from hereabouts. And we who were witness did tell the others how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And we all, fear-

ing for the devils which be back yonder in the Antonia by the temple, began to pray Yeshu to depart. And he and the man who had the legion did so, each in his own way.

Anonymous witness

13

Testimony of Miriam of Magdala - Part 3

...Very early in the morning I came to the tomb at the rising of the sun. And looking into the tomb I saw the linen cloth of the Master with blood on it. Then I ran back to the camp. I came to Rock and told him that they have killed the Master and have taken him out of the tomb, and I knew not where they have laid him. Rock looked at me hard, so that I felt his eyes were boring holes into me. He asked me how the Master had come to the tomb. I said that I had left him there last night, but that I did not tell the others, for I was afraid. (I did not tell him that I was afraid to speak earlier because I thought the Master did not wish the others to know where he was. Rock did not question me about this. I think that it made good enough sense to him that I, a woman, was simply afraid.) Then Rock got up and began running toward the tomb. I got up and also

began running back to the tomb, taking a rough but direct path to the cemetery rather than the road to Jerusalem which Rock had taken. I had to stop several times to catch my breath, for I was becoming weary with so much running.

When I arrived back at the tomb Rock had already left. No one was there except a man whom I took to be the gardener. (He was some way off with his back to me, tending a new vine.) I began weeping and, as I wept, I stooped down and looked into the tomb. And I saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the Master's body had lain. And they said to me "Woman, why are you weeping?" I said to them "Because they have taken away the Master (whom I thought was dead), and I know not where they have laid him." And when I had said this I turned back and saw the Master standing. But I did not know that it was the Master. (For I could not see his face for his garment.) He said to me "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" I, supposing him to

be the gardener, said to him “Sir, if you have borne him hence, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” (I said this for I thought that that the body of the Master did not belong in the unused tomb which had been his hideout, and I thought that perhaps the gardener had removed it for this reason. And so I offered to take it someplace other than back to the tomb.) Then the Master said to me “Miriam.” I turned to face him and said to him “Master?” He then said to me “Do not touch me (for I was about to embrace him); for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

I began weeping again, but now for joy, and I did as the Master bade me. I began running again back to the camp, again taking the direct route rather than using the road, as I wished to tell the others as soon as possible. I did not understand what the Master meant when he said that he had not yet ascended to the Father but was about to. He seemed to be saying

that he was not yet killed but soon would be. But he was in no danger. Nor did I understand why he did not want me to touch him. But he was alive! As I ran again back to the camp I did not need to stop and rest. Nor did I tear my clothes in the rough country. I simply hopped over the bumps and bushes which lay in my path as I ran.

When I returned to the camp I told the other disciples that I had seen the Master, and that he had spoken these things to me. But they did not believe me. They did not believe that the Master had ever been at the tomb. They thought that he had been taken the previous night by the temple priests in the clearing at Gethsemane and was now in the hands of Pilate.

When I began to repeat what had happened Rock looked at me with anger, and another told me to lie down and try to sleep. They all knew that the Master had cast out seven demons from me when I met him, and I believe that as I assured them the Master was safe they were thinking “Now comes demon number eight.”

But I did lie down. I had done the Master's bidding and there was nothing more to do. I was very tired, but I could not sleep for I was also very excited. As I lay there I heard other people speaking about two others who saw the Master as they were walking in the country. They said he was in another form and wore a long white garment. I thought that perhaps they had seen one of the angels which I had seen in the tomb, but I was not and am not sure.

Some time later Mother and Salome came to me and told me there was something important for us to do in Jerusalem. I got up and followed them as we began to leave the camp. All of the women were coming with us, I saw. Just as we were leaving Rock came up to Mother and told her he was coming with us. Mother and Salome stopped everyone in the road, and Salome argued with Rock about who should go and who should stay while Mother went back to the camp, returning with James the Lesser. (This is James the son of Mother and not James the Greater, who is the son of Salome.) James took

Rock aside and spoke quietly with him for a few moments. Then Rock lowered his head and returned to the camp. This surprised me greatly, for I had never before seen Rock defer to any of the other disciples. James nodded to Mother and Salome before also returning to the camp. As he did so I noticed, for the first time, the resemblance of James to the Master.

The trip into Jerusalem was uneventful. Our lookout on the western slope of the Mount of Olives gave us the safe signal as long as we could see him. Approaching the temple mount, we broke up into small groups. Salome was with the first group. Mother reminded each group to be silent as it departed towards and then around the southeast side of the temple mount, on a path which led past the main entrance thereto and then into the city itself. Mother and I were in the last group. The others were waiting for us in the city when we arrived.

We began moving northwest. Mother and Salome began speaking to me about what I had seen that the

others had not believed. They told me that they believed me. But they also told me that what I had seen was the spirit body of the Master, and not his worldly body. For he had been taken by Pilate's people last night. Mother and Salome did not know whether the Master had been taken in the clearing at Gethsemane or at the tomb. But they did know that he had been taken, and he was to be crucified. They told me that is why the Master had told me that he had not yet ascended to the Father but would soon do so. They also explained why the Master had told me not to touch him. For the body that I saw was a spirit body, and it would be harmful to touch it. They more they spoke the worse I felt. I realized that I had been afraid all along that the others could not all be wrong, and only I right, about the Master being safe.

We came to Golgotha. Three men were being crucified there. Although Mother and Salome stopped us when we were yet afar off, I saw that the man in the middle was the Master. His face was bruised for

being beaten, but it was him. I can and do tell you that he died before us all that afternoon. More than this I can not tell you, for I do not even think of it. Others can tell you more if you wish to know more. For many saw what I saw. I am sorry.

I do not remember how we got out of Jerusalem. As we approached the camp I fell down in the road. Others raised me to my feet and a man took me up and carried me in his arms. For a long time I kept my eyes closed. Then I looked to see who carried me. It was Rock. His eyes were screwed shut and another led him by the shoulder. I saw the tears and looked away, thereafter keeping my eyes averted that I not shame him.

We came into Bethany, stopping at a high wall. Rock put me down on my feet and I saw that we were at an iron door in the wall. Mother knocked on the door, using a clever device thereon to do so. She knocked in a special way, I think. A man within asked who was there and Mother said that she was there with me. After a time we heard bolts being

removed from the door and it opened. A young woman beckoned us to enter. I recognized her as the sister of Lazarus, whom I had seen when the Master had raised her brother from the dead a few days earlier.

Mother and I entered the home, which was a mansion. Rock did not enter. (I believe that he returned to the camp.) Mother and I were in a hall which led past many rooms. There was a large dining room on the right. I saw several people therein, none of whom I recognized. Lazarus may have been one of them, but I do not know. (For I had not seen his face when he had appeared before the crowd at the entrance to the cave wherein he had been buried. For his face had been bound with a napkin, and I had not thereafter had an opportunity to meet him.) The people in the dining room watched Mother and me with concern as we passed. I think that they wanted to comfort us for our grief, but Mother raised her hand as we passed by them and continued down the hall. The rooms were very beautiful. There was a

large silver mirror in one of them, and in another was a menorah which I think was of gold. We passed a large round room on our left which was open to the sky. Strange flowers and herbs were in the room such as I had never before seen. We came then to a room with nothing in it that I noticed except a great bed. Mother led me to the bed as I wondered what else besides sleeping the room was for. Mother gestured that I should lie down. I looked at my clothes, which were dirty, and at the beautiful fine bedspread, and at Mother. She tried to smile and said “Nonsense,” guiding me onto the bed. When I had lain down I was suddenly very sleepy. Mother removed my sandals and was then at the door, closing it. Then she was sitting in a chair by the door, watching over me. Before I fell asleep I saw that Mother looked older for her grief. Feeling that she was the strongest woman I had ever known, I fell asleep. I slept for a very long time. I would have slept even longer had I not been awakened by the sounds of people shouting.

Miriam of Magdala

14

Testimony of Philip at Hierapolis

Please let me be certain that I understand you correctly, brothers. You say that you have come down from Jerusalem all the way here, to Phrygia, just to speak with me. And you wish me to tell you what I witnessed when our Lord first appeared to the disciples after his resurrection. And you wish me to tell you this so that it may be written down and preserved, so that all generations after us may know the truth of this thing.

Yes. I will try to do this. It was twenty years ago, but it was the most memorable day of my life, and parts of what I remember are so clear that they could have happened yesterday...But I should begin two days earlier.

I and Nathanael and the other disciples were at our camp between Bethany and Jerusalem on the afternoon that our Lord died. The women had witnessed this in Jerusalem and they informed the men when

they returned. A short time later Salome and her sons, James and John, told the other disciples and myself that we should come to the home in Bethany. This is the home where we had partaken of our last supper and celebrated our last Passover with our Lord on the previous evening. Salome said that it was wise to leave because Pilate and the temple authorities might kill us if they discovered the camp and caught us. So we all came to the home in Bethany with Salome. We met Rock on the way and he joined us. The home was large and we stayed there through the sabbath, keeping the doors and windows closed and bolted. Only Salome, Mother (that is, Miriam the Mother of our Lord), Miriam of Magdala (who had been overcome with grief and was resting in one of the bedrooms), and a daughter of Simon the Leper were there besides ourselves. I don't know where Simon was. (I do not think that I ever met Simon the Leper. Nor am I certain of his surname. Some have said that it was Cleophas, and others that it was Alphaeus. I did learn later, howev-

er, that Simon was not truly leprous. But he did not discourage this rumor as he preferred not to be troubled by the neighbors. The neighbors did not trouble us when we were there.) After the sabbath we stayed in the home through the first day of the week, mourning for the Lord.

In the early afternoon Mother, Salome and the daughter of Simon left to get some food, for there was hardly any left in the house, save what they left for us in the dining room for our supper. As they were departing Mother asked us to check to be sure that all the doors and windows were still locked. After doing so we simply grieved for the Lord. Later in the afternoon James the Just (whom we called James the Lesser in those days) suggested that we partake of supper in the dining room, and we did so.

As we were finishing supper, and some of us had risen therefrom, there was a scratching at the window, as I recall, or something such as that. My memory is unclear about this, as it was something unimportant. We had all gotten up and someone, I

do not recall who, was trying to see through the shutter when I heard a gasp of astonishment. Turning around, I saw the Lord standing there amidst us! He said to us “Peace be unto you.” At first we were simply stunned. Then he showed us the marks of his crucifixion, and we were overcome with joy.

Then he spoke to us. It was years ago, and I do not remember his exact words, but I do remember the general nature of what he said and of what happened. As I recall we were shouting with joy and embracing the Lord when Miriam of Magdala appeared at the door of the dining room. This is the Miriam who had told us that she had seen the Lord earlier, but none of us had believed her. Miriam, whose eyes were larger than I had ever seen them, came to the Lord and knelt at his feet. She tried to hold his hand, with the print of the nail in it, against her cheek, but instead he lightly stroked her hair with the back of his fingers while he gently upbraided the rest of us for our unbelief and hardness of heart for not believing her earlier. The Lord then

went to each of us and breathed on us. And he spoke to us of our mission. He told us that it has been granted to us to bring knowledge of the heavenly Father to all the nations of the world. He said that through us the spirit of the Father will pour down upon the earth. He told us that the world will resist us, for the world knows not the Father. He said that we will be beaten in the synagogues and reviled among men, and even murdered, for the mission. But he told us that even the prince of the world can not touch us in our heart. He told us that we are children of the living Father. And he told us that we will succeed.

Then we went into the atrium in the home, which was a large round room which was open to the sky. We all joined hands in a circle about him. He raised up his hands, blessing us, and looked up to heaven. He told us to close our eyes and try to see, with our eyes closed - that we not break the vision - his spirit ascending up into heaven, as James delivered the prayer. I did so, as did the others. And I did see the

Lord ascending up into heaven, even though my eyes were closed. At the conclusion of the prayer we opened our eyes. Although we were all still standing in a circle with our hands joined, the Lord was gone. And there was only one way that he could have gone--straight up to heaven.

Philip at Hierapolis

15

Second Letter of Gaius Quinctilius Gravitus to his wife Cornelia

My dear wife Cornelia,

I am pleased to tell you that my transfer to Massilia has been approved early. I just learned so this morning. I am off duty today and have leisure to bring you up to date on this and many other things.

I am so pleased that I will soon be leaving this post, Cornelia. I must tell you what happened three days ago when “Jesus,” whom I told you about earlier, was crucified. It will help you to understand why I am eager to leave Judea.

The other centurion, the one the men call Gramps, was assigned to supervise the executions that day, and I did not see it myself. But Gramps told me about it afterwards. He told me that a number of women who were followers of Jesus came to watch their leader die, but not one man who followed him

showed up. The guards were expecting trouble, and they were ready for it, but no one among the Jesus people interfered. The women just came to watch Jesus suffer, it seemed to Gramps. In the late afternoon Jesus began speaking from the cross. Gramps told me that this surprised him, for before this he had not opened his mouth. Gramps said that he thinks Jesus was reciting one of the holy verses of the Jews. He is probably right. Gramps was stationed for several years in Tiberias before his transfer here, and he understands these people better than I do. Anyway, not long after Jesus began speaking one of the locals put what the guards later said was vinegar on a sponge, and he tormented Jesus, who was thirsty, with it. Soon thereafter Jesus died. Then one of our guards, Septimus, slit the corpse open below the ribs with his javelin. It was quite messy, as Gramps described it. Later, when the guards threw the corpses of the condemned men down onto the field set aside for Jewish criminals, that of Jesus landed headlong and seemed to burst asunder in the middle, where it

had been gashed, and the bowels poured out. I asked Gramps if he had reprimanded Septimus for the unnecessary mess. Gramps said that he had not. He said that what Septimus had done was necessary. Gramps explained to me that for all he knew the vinegar might have been some kind of sleeping potion, to only make it seem that Jesus had died. Gramps asked me to imagine what Pilate would have done if after Jesus were taken down from the cross he had stood up again. (I got his point. We Romans are far outnumbered by the Jews here and their fear of crucifixion is mostly what keeps them in line.) Then Gramps said that the people of this province are capable of things which civilized people can not even imagine. He said they have a way of coming at us from a direction we do not anticipate, and this makes them dangerous. I believe he is right, Cornelia. In truth I would rather have the Germani at my front in war than the people of this province at my back in peace.

I am recalled to duty and must end this letter.

There is new trouble in the temple. The followers of Jesus are back. This is bad news, I fear, Cornelia.

Gaius Quinctilius Gravius

16

Letter of Miriam of Magdala to an Unknown Reader

To an unknown reader,

I am writing this letter to you, the pain in my arm permitting. When I am finished I will place it in the jar by my pallet. It is my hope that some day people will want to know what I know about the beginning. And I hope that you do. I would think the people of my own time would wish to know this. But they do not, and I do not understand why. There are many things which I do not understand, and I have given up trying to understand such worldly things.

The people of the Way in Jerusalem do respect me. They have given me this hut to live in as long as I wish. And it is all that I need, although I do wish it were not so far removed from the city. Every other day or so a few of the people of the Way come out to my little hut here in the desert. They bring food and

water for me, and some of them bring simple gifts, for which I am grateful. They place what they have brought a few feet in front of me and then retreat, bowing respectfully as they do so. Most of those who come are new in the Way, I think. And I think that coming to see me has become an initiation tradition for some of them. But they do not speak to me. When in the early days I would try to speak to them they would back away quickly and leave. I no longer try to speak to them. They have been told I think not to listen to me. But they do respect me, as I have said. And they admire me for having known the Master when he walked with us, which is now over thirty five years ago.

I could I think have been useful in spreading the teachings of the Master, but this has not been granted to me. When I asked the leaders of the Way in Jerusalem for a mission after the Master had ascended they told me that the most useful thing which I can do is to pray for the success and safety of the others. And this I have done. But I think that I

could have done more.

I have not completely lost touch with my old friends among the people of the Way. Sometimes, especially in the early years, I would see in Jerusalem another one who had followed the Master, and I would usually try to speak with them. The women who knew me before did not hesitate to speak with me, and I have learned much from them. Some of the things which I have learned have been surprising to me. It was not a surprise when I learned that James the Lesser had become the leader in the Way. But previously, not long after the Master ascended, I was greatly surprised to learn that he was the brother in the flesh of the Master. I had always thought that the Master called my friend Miriam “Mother” because in addition to being my friend she was also the mother of James and of Joses. But Suzanna told me a few weeks after the Master ascended that Miriam was also the mother of the Master. And others also told me this when I asked them about it. I do not understand why I did not know

this when the Master walked with us, for many knew it later.

About five years ago I saw Joanna in the market and I was able to speak with her for awhile. One of the things which she told me also surprised me greatly. She said that she had suggested to James a few years earlier that a book be written about the life of the Master, so that the people of all generations could read about him. James said that someday such a book will be written. Joanna asked James why it can not be written right away. James did not answer this question, but another who stood there asked if I still lived. Joanna received the impression that such a book will not be written while I am alive!

But I do not fault James for his decisions or actions concerning me or anything else. For James was a good man, and I know that what he did, he did for the best of reasons. I met him, quite by accident, a few weeks before he was killed. (This was about four years ago.) We were both happy to see each other, as many wonderful memories came back to

each of us upon meeting. After speaking with James for awhile about the early days I told him that I wanted to do more than pray. He looked at me with great affection and told me that we can not always choose how we serve the Father. And he also told me that I must not underestimate the effect of a prayer from an undivided heart.

James is gone now. And so is Rock. Rock was a man who could have done much evil, I think, had he not known the Master. Rock was against me being included with the other disciples, and thereby close to the Master, but I understand why. Rock was jealous. He was jealous because of his love for the Master, which I also understand. And because of this love Rock became a good man and even a great man. He was crucified not long ago. And many others of those of us who walked with the Master have now given their lives for the mission. But others have taken their places, and what the Master began continues and grows. And I do feel to have been a part of it. And I feel that I have been granted an

important part. But I do not know what that part is.

Yesterday I made my way to Jerusalem and clambered part way up the Mount of Olives, to a place where I had a good view of the city. Then I just sat and watched and listened, for a very long time, as the shadow of the temple stretched slowly towards me in the passing afternoon. A family from Jerusalem was there on a picnic. After their repast the men spoke of the temple. One of them said that the priests have split among themselves and are now preparing to fight against each other. He said that it is a bad situation, and he said that it will become worse. More trouble is coming, I fear. But I think that I will be spared more of the troubles of this world.

The pain in my arm is a little worse now and I will end this letter soon. I will write another when I feel better.

After the family left yesterday, on the Mount of Olives, I continued to watch the city for awhile as the afternoon deepened. And then I saw that the

shadow of the temple was gone. The sky was clouding up and a western breeze had risen. I got myself to my feet and managed, in time, to make my way back to my hut. It took about three hours. As I hobbled back through the rain I remembered something that the Master once said. He said that with the Father all things are possible. The sky was very blue that day, when he said it. We were lying on a haystack with John north of Chorazin, well away from Judea, where we were safe. All things were possible. And then Yeshu was taken from us. He was raised up into glory. And now here I am, an old woman, with nothing more to do than to leave this world. Then the people of the Way can write their book about Yeshu. But none of them knew him as I did.

When I returned home I got on my knees by my pallet and I begged the Father to let me return to the beginning, where I met Yeshu, when he showed me who I am.

I am blessed beyond measure.

Miriam of Magdala

PART 2

SCRIPTURAL BASIS OF PART 1

Jesus said, “Know what is before your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed.”

—Gospel of Thomas Saying 5

1

Introduction

Of the first four books of the New Testament - the four canonical gospels - the first three, the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke, are called the synoptic gospels by students of the New Testament. “Synoptic” means to “see together.” Matthew, Mark and Luke are indeed so similar in form and content that if one lays them down side by side and views them together one perceives that there is clearly a structural relationship between these three gospels. The basic features of this relationship, accepted today by virtually all serious students of the New Testament (including New Testament Studies professionals), are summarized below. (I will henceforth refer to the authors of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as “Matthew,” “Mark,” “Luke” and “John” respectively, with no implications of historical identity intended.)

1. The Hypothesis of Markan Priority:

The book of Mark was used as a written source document by Matthew and by Luke when these authors wrote their own gospels.

2. The Q Hypothesis:

Matthew and Luke also used as a written source document, when writing their gospels, a collection of the sayings of Jesus. This “sayings source” is called the Q document. (“Q” is probably an abbreviation of “Quelle,” which is the German word for “source.”) This document has now been lost. It can only be known from reconstructions compiled by comparing the sayings of Jesus in Matthew and Luke.

3. The Two Source Hypothesis:

In writing his gospel Matthew inserted sayings

from Q into a narrative of events derived from the gospel of Mark. In writing his own gospel Luke employed the same process. Matthew and Luke constructed their gospels independently of each other, however.

The reader who wishes to learn more about the explanation summarized above is referred to an excellent review of the subject in the *Q Thomas Reader*. (See endnote 1.)

The last of the four canonical gospels to be written, the book of John, is significantly different in content than the synoptic gospels. It is much less dependent on Mark than are the synoptic gospels. In John the spiritual teachings of Jesus are particularly emphasized. Another noteworthy feature of John is that according to this gospel Jesus frequently visits Jerusalem. The impression presented by the synoptics is that Jesus appears in the environs of Jerusalem only once or twice during his ministry.

When the Q hypothesis was first considered by students of the New Testament in the nineteenth century one of the more persuasive arguments raised against it was that there was no confirming evidence that such a thing as a “sayings gospel” had ever existed within Christianity. The force of this argument was completely nullified in 1945, when a nearly completely intact copy of the long lost Gospel of Thomas was recovered from the Egyptian desert. For the Gospel of Thomas proves to be another example of this very thing. (It is however a sayings gospel distinct from Q.) The Gospel of Thomas was part of a larger discovery of thirteen leather bound codices, in an earthenware jar, which had been beneath a boulder, at the base of the Jabal-al-Tarif cliff, about 6.2 miles northeast of the city of Nag Hammadi. For a more complete discussion of the Nag Hammadi find, with emphasis on the Gospel of Thomas, the reader is referred to Stephen J. Patterson’s excellent introduction to the Gospel of Thomas in [6]. (See endnote 2.) Some of the facts presented in his discussion which are useful to summarize here are the following:

a. Students of the New Testament have been aware of the existence of the Gospel of Thomas for many years. The early church leaders Origen, Jerome and Hippolytus all mention it. It was not favored, however, by these writers. In the early fourth century Cyril of Jerusalem forbade its reading, under an erroneous assumption that it had been written by a disciple of the arch-heretic Mani. Under the pressure of opposition by these and other early church leaders it was eventually lost to history.

b. At the end of the nineteenth century several fragments of the Gospel of Thomas, copied in Greek, were recovered, also in Egypt, about 150 miles downstream from Nag Hammadi. These fragments have been dated orthographically to about 200 C.E. These fragments are called the Oxyrhynchus fragments. They were not recognized as being from the Gospel of Thomas, however, until after the Nag Hammadi discovery.

c. The virtually complete copy of the Gospel of Thomas discovered at Nag Hammadi was written in Coptic and dated, along with the rest of the rest of the Nag Hammadi material, to the fourth century C.E. (Coptic was a written form of the Egyptian language of the second century which used Greek letters, rather than the hieroglyphic form of the Egyptian written language or its cursive variants. The Coptic written language was invented by Greek-educated Christian missionaries who set out from Alexandria in the second century to proselytize the countryside.)

d. A good way to begin to understand the gospel is to begin reading it. The opening line and the first few sayings of the Gospel of Thomas (translated here from the Coptic by Marvin Meyer) are as follows:

These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Didymos Judas Thomas recorded.

1. And he said, “Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death.”

2. Jesus said, “Let one who seeks not stop seeking until one finds. When one finds, one will be disturbed. When one is disturbed, one will marvel, and will reign over all.”

3. Jesus said, “If your leaders say to you, ‘Behold, the kingdom is in heaven,’ then the birds of heaven will precede you. If they say to you, ‘It is in the sea,’ then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside you and it is outside you. When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you dwell in poverty, and you are the poverty.”

4. Jesus said, “The person old in days will not hesitate to ask a little child seven days old about the

place of life, and that person will live. For many of the first will be last, and will become a single one.”

5. Jesus said, “Know what is before your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed.”

6. His disciples asked him and said to him, “Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?” Jesus said, “Do not lie, and do not do what you hate, because all things are disclosed before heaven. For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and there is nothing covered that will remain without being disclosed.”

7. Jesus said, “Blessed is the lion that the human will eat, so that the lion becomes human. And defiled is the human that the lion will eat, and the lion will become human.”

The gospel as usually presented consists of 114 sayings. (The numbering of the sayings is a modern feature, however, and it has the potential of being misleading. For example, two adjacent original sayings could have been interpreted as a single saying and assigned a single number.) After the last saying appears the title of the book, which is “The Gospel according to Thomas.” (This title was probably added secondarily, however, by a scribe.)

e. During the earliest years after its discovery one of the most important questions for interested students has been whether the Gospel of Thomas is dependent on written versions of the canonical gospels or whether it represents an independent codification of a Jesus sayings tradition. The answer to this question which emerges from analysis to date (which analysis is summarized (see endnote 3) most clearly by Patterson in [6]) is that, except for a few apparent instances of what is called “scribal harmonization,” the Gospel of Thomas is independent of the canonical gospels. (“Scribal harmonization” is the copying

of a document by a scribe incorrectly in order to bring it into closer conformity with a parallel text known to the scribe from another gospel.)

f. The Gospel of Thomas must have originated prior to 200 C.E. because of the dating of the Oxyrhynchus fragments. For reasons outlined in his introduction in [6], Patterson dates the original written gospel to the last three decades of the first century. (We will see later that there is reason to believe that the original corpus of the gospel was written even earlier.) It should be noted however that some of the sayings may have been added to, and others deleted from, the original gospel at a later date than that of the original composition. (This would be easier to do with a sayings gospel such as Thomas than with a narrative gospel, such as the canonical gospels.)

g. The question of the identity of the purported author of this gospel, identified in the opening line as “Didymos Judas Thomas,” is most interesting.

“Didymos” is Greek for “twin,” and “Thomas” is Semitic for “twin.” “Didymos Judas Thomas” apparently means “Judas the twin.” For reasons outlined in [6], Koester has suggested (see endnote 4) that the opening line of the Gospel of Thomas intends to claim as its author Judas, the twin brother of Jesus. (Although this suggestion may seem preposterous to the contemporary Christian, it is well to remember that very little concerning the personal life and family relations of the historical Jesus has been preserved in the canonical gospels. Also, the historical accuracy of the accounts of Jesus’ birth in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 has been seriously questioned, for what appear to be good reasons, by some very capable students of the New Testament. (See endnote 5.) Further, a great deal of information and early opinions about Jesus was lost after the Roman emperor Constantine ordered in 326 C.E. that the books of “heretics” (Christians who held minority opinions) should be hunted out and destroyed. (See endnote 6.) As we are all among the victims of the

extensive book burning initiated by Constantine, it is wise for us to abstain from rejecting any novel notions concerning the historical Jesus until such notions have been examined on their own merits.)

Koester's suggestion is supported by the circumstance that the Gospel of Thomas appears, again for reasons outlined (see endnote 7) by Patterson, to be associated with Eastern Syria. For there is a tradition in Syrian Christianity that the apostle Thomas was the twin brother of Jesus. (See endnote 8.)

Patterson points out, however, that regardless of the historical identity of "Didymos Judas Thomas" we cannot be reasonably certain that the aforementioned personage was in fact the author of the Gospel of Thomas. New insight, which bears on this question as well as supporting Koester's suggestion, will emerge as a product of this study.

2

Secret Mark and Markan Duplicates

In the summer of 1958 Professor Morton Smith of Columbia University received permission to examine the contents of the tower library at the Greek Orthodox monastery of Mar Saba. This monastery is located a few miles southeast of Jerusalem. The library contains a number of Greek manuscripts and early printed books containing manuscript supplements. During his examination Professor Smith discovered and photographed a fragment of a letter which had been copied, approximately in the mid-eighteenth century, on to the three end pages of an old printed book, which was itself a seventeenth century collection of letters of Ignatius of Antioch. The copied letter fragment discovered by Professor Smith appeared to be that of an original letter, written in Greek, from Clement of Alexandria, who lived about 150-215 C.E., to a person named “Theodore.” The contents of the letter were quite surprising, as

they include two quotations from a secret gospel which Clement attributes to the historical person Mark.

The first quotation, which I will henceforth call SMk 1 (as an abbreviation of “Secret Mark, quotation 1”), is as follows:

And they come into Bethany. And a certain woman whose brother had died was there. And, coming, she prostrated herself before Jesus and says to him, “Son of David, have mercy on me.” But the disciples rebuked her. And Jesus, being angered, went off with her into the garden where the tomb was, and straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb. And going near, Jesus rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. And straightaway, going in where the youth was, he stretched forth his hand and raised him, seizing his hand. But the youth, looking upon him, loved him and began to beseech him that he might be with him. And going out of the tomb, they came into the house of the youth, for he

was rich. And after six days Jesus told him what to do, and in the evening the youth comes to him, wearing a linen cloth over his naked body. And he remained with him that night, for Jesus taught him the mystery of the kingdom of God. And thence, arising, he returned to the other side of the Jordan.

According to the letter from Clement the above text appeared between the verses which we know in canonical Mark as Mk 10:34 and Mk 10:35.

The second quotation in Clement's letter, which I will henceforth call SMk 2 (for "Secret Mark, quotation 2"), is as follows:

And the sister of the youth whom Jesus loved and his mother and Salome were there, and Jesus did not receive them.

According to Clement's letter the text of SMk 2 appeared immediately after the first incidence of "Jericho" in the verse which we know as Mk 10:46,

and which is reproduced below. (All New Testament quotations in this study are from the King James version.)

Mk 10:46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

Clement states in effect in his letter that Mark, while in Rome with the Apostle Peter, wrote the non-secret version of his gospel and then, after the death of Peter, Mark came to Alexandria and there “composed a more spiritual gospel for the use of those who were being perfected.” He does not explicitly discuss in his letter any other ways in which the secret version of Mark’s gospel differed from the public version. His letter may suggest that there were other additions to Secret Mark besides SMk 1 and SMk 2 above since, in describing Mark’s construction of the longer and secret gospel Clement in-

cludes the comment that “to the stories already written he added yet others and, moreover, brought in certain sayings of which he knew the interpretation would, as a mystagogue, lead the hearers into the innermost sanctuary of that truth hidden by seven veils.”

If the copied fragment photographed by Professor Smith is a genuine copy of a letter actually written by Clement, the conclusion is that during Clement’s lifetime there were two versions of the gospel of Mark, a longer secret version and the shorter public version which was the source of canonical Mark. The interested reader is referred to *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, by Morton Smith (see endnote 1), for a much fuller discussion of this subject. For the purposes of this study it will be sufficient to note that, after a thorough examination of the evidence by Smith and his very capable colleagues, Smith’s conclusion was that the letter is correctly attributed to Clement.

Since the discovery of Clement’s letter there has

been considerable interest by scholars in the question of whether the longer secret version of Mark was composed before or after the shorter version. On this subject Helmut Koester has written, “Canonical Mark is derived from Secret Mark. The basic difference between the two seems to be that the redactor of canonical Mark eliminated the story of the raising of the youth and the reference to this story in Mk 10:46....Clement of Alexandria believed that Mark first wrote the ‘canonical’ (or ‘public’) Gospel, and later produced the ‘secret’ version of this writing. My observations, however, lead to the conclusion that ‘canonical’ Mark was a purified version of that ‘secret’ Gospel, because the traces of the author of Secret Mark are still visible in the Canonical Gospel of Mark.” (See endnote 2.) Crossan is, in a general sense, in agreement with this position. In his excellent book *The Historical Jesus* Crossan dates the creation of Secret Mark to the early seventies C.E. and writes with respect to canonical Mark, “The second version of Mark expurgated those pas-

sages (that is, SMk 1 and SMk 2 above) but left their textual debris strewn across its text. That may well have been done, with the minimal rewriting necessary, by the end of the seventies C.E.” (See endnote 3.)

What Crossan is referring to by “textual debris strewn across its text” is best explained with a few examples. First, let us agree to denote the first sentence of SMk 1 as SMk 1:1, the second sentence of SMk 1 as SMk 1:2, and so forth. Then we note that the quotation “Son of David, have mercy on me” in SMk 1:3 above is identical with a fragment of the quotation “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me” of blind Bartimaeus in Mk 10:47. Again, the phrase “going in where the youth was” in SMk 1:7 is interestingly similar to the ending phrase of Mk 5:40, which is “and entereth in where the damsel was lying.” And again, the phrase “for he was rich” in SMk 1:9 is virtually identical in meaning to “for he had great possessions” in Mk 10:22. And again, “wearing a linen cloth over his naked body” in SMk

1:10 is nearly identical to “having a linen cloth cast about his naked body” in Mk 14:51. What is going on here? As noted above, Crossan’s opinion is that the censor who excised SMk 1 from Secret Mark not only excised it, but dismembered it. “Such dismemberment indicates the censorship’s strategy of making the story look like a pastiche rather than an excision from canonical Mark.” (See endnote 4.)

Thereafter, its presence in any version of Mark could be counterclaimed as pastiche from such residue.” (See endnote 5.) But there is no consensus on this matter, as of this writing, among students of the New Testament.

In the next chapter we will look more closely at such duplicate or nearly duplicate textual fragments in canonical Mark and the two additional passages known to have existed in Secret Mark. We will find that they lead us to something more important than an answer to the question of whether Secret Mark predated canonical Mark. (See endnote 6.) They will lead us, in fact, to a most amazing discovery.

3

The Jigsaw Puzzle

Let us examine a few Markan duplicates and near-duplicates with an eye to the context within which the components of each such pair appear. For the first Markan duplicate cited near the end of the previous chapter, the immediate contexts (with the fragment of interest in each underlined) are:

Mk 10:46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

Mk 10:47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.”

versus:

SMk 1:1 And they come into Bethany.

SMk 1:2 And a certain woman whose brother had died was there.

SMk 1:3 And, coming, she prostrated herself before Jesus and says to him, “Son of David, have mercy on me.”

Viewing each of the above pair of underlined fragments with respect to its context we note that the second underlined fragment has a problem with respect to its context that the first does not have. The problem is that it doesn't quite fit. While it is plausible that blind Bartimaeus should ask Jesus to have mercy on him, it is not plausible that the woman of SMk 1 should make this request. For it is her brother who has died, and he is in much greater need of the mercy of Jesus than she is.

Let's look at another pair in the same way. This time we'll consider a Markan near-duplicate contained entirely within canonical Mark. I reproduce below quite a bit of the context of each component fragment of the near-duplicate because I will be re-

ferring back to each of the longer passages later in this study. (Please try to ignore the vertical lines which I have placed in Mk 5:2 and in Mk 5:17. They will be useful later.) As before, the fragment of interest in each passage is underlined:

Mk 5:1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

Mk 5:2 And when he was come out of the ship, | immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

Mk 5:3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

Mk 5:4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

Mk 5:5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones,

Mk 5:6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and

worshipped him.

Mk 5:7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

Mk 5:8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

Mk 5:9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is legion, for we are many.

Mk 5:10 And he besought him much that he would not send him away out of the country.

Mk 5:11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

Mk 5:12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

Mk 5:13 And forthwith Jesus give them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

Mk 5:14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

Mk 5:15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

Mk 5:16 And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.

Mk 5:17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.|

Mk 5:18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

Mk 5:19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

Mk 5:20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him:

and all men did marvel.

versus:

Mk 16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Mk 16:2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Mk 16:3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

Mk 16:4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

Mk 16:5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

Mk 16:6 And he said unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he

is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

Mk 16:7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Mk 16:8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

Again viewing each of the above underlined fragments with respect to its context we find that the second has a problem with respect to its context that the first does not have. Again the problem is that the second fragment doesn't quite fit. (Every component of the first underlined fragment is justified by its context: the man was "sitting" instead of exhibiting the previously reported active behavior; he was "clothed" instead of being naked - Mark doesn't tell us explicitly in the context that he was previously naked, but this is plausibly inferred from information in the fragment that he was later "clothed", and

there is no incongruity or lack of connection with the context which is thereby produced; he was “in his right mind” instead of being in the condition reported in the preceding context, which was clearly otherwise; and the witnesses “were afraid,” which seems a reasonable reaction to the sudden and dramatic transformation of the “man with an unclean spirit.” The most obvious problem with the second underlined fragment arises from the phrase “on the right side” therein. There is nothing in the context of this phrase which justifies it. That is, there is no satisfactory answer to the question “Why does Mark specify that the young man in the tomb was sitting ‘on the right side’ thereof?”)

Now let’s look in the same way at a “triplicate” (more precisely a “near-triplicate”), all of the component fragments of which are in canonical Mark. Consider:

Mk 2:1 And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the

house.

Mk 2:2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

Mk 2:3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

Mk 2:4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

and

Mk 6:30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

Mk 6:31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

Mk 6:32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

(There follows a description of a bread and fish miracle in Mk 6:33-44.)

versus:

Mk 3:13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.

(In Mk 3:14-18 Jesus ordains all of the twelve disciples except Judas Iscariot, whom he ordains in the following verse.)

Mk 3:19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

Mk 3:20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

Mk 3:21 And when his friends heard of it, they went

out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

Mk 3:22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

Mk 3:23 And he calleth them unto him, and said unto them in parables, how can Satan cast out Satan? (Mk 3:24-29 is a continuation of the response of Jesus to the “Beelzebub accusation.”)

Viewing each of the three underlined fragments with respect to its context, as we did earlier, we find that the third underlined fragment has a problem with respect to its context that the first two do not have. Again, it doesn't fit. The phrase “no room to receive them” in the first underlined fragment fits well with the information provided by its context that the one sick of the palsy entered the house through the roof because there was no room about the door. The phrase “and they had no leisure so much as to eat” of the second underlined fragment

also fits well with its context, as immediately thereafter the disciples go to witness a bread and fish miracle (and, plausibly, to eat). But the phrase “so that they could not so much as eat bread” in the third underlined fragment has no connection with its context. (That is, unless one interprets the immediately following verse “And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.” to mean that Jesus became so hungry that his friends came out to put him under restraint because it had been reported to them that Jesus was “beside himself.” If this is the case it is incomprehensible that Mark speaks no more of the hunger problem. He doesn’t even tell us if anyone gave Jesus something to eat. This interpretation is implausible and also, I think, ludicrous.)

A second interpretation suggested by the third underlined fragment (but not explicitly stated) as to why Jesus was reported to be “beside himself” is that there was a lack of space produced by the press of the multitude. This provides what some might

consider a satisfactory explanation of why “they said, He is beside himself.” But note that this interpretation does not explain the lack of conceptual coherence between the reference to food in “so that they could not so much as eat bread” and the context of this phrase.

Note also that the fragment “and they went into an house” in Mk 3:19 above, immediately preceding the underlined fragment in question, would fit nicely just after the colon in Mk 9:33, which is reproduced below:

Mk 9:33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

If the fragment “and they went into an house” in Mk 3:19 had originally been in a written source document used by Mark in constructing his gospel, within the context that became the source of Mk 9:33, the source document would have read:

And he came to Capernaum: and they went into an house, and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

And if that fragment had somehow migrated into Mk 3:19, into a position immediately before the underlined fragment, there would be two consequences of this migration:

1. The second interpretation discussed above would be made more plausible because of the information that Jesus was in a house. (Jesus had last previously been reported, at Mk 3:13, as having gone “up into a mountain”);
2. Contemporary students of the New Testament would spend more than a little time wondering where the house of Mk 9:33 came from.

Note finally that if the fragment “and they went into an house” was obtained by Mark from the source document hypothesized above, and if the third underlined fragment was constructed largely from pieces copied from the source documents for the first two underlined fragments, then the proper textual context preceding Mk 3:21, “And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.” has disappeared. In other words the question arises, if Mk 3:21 is copied from a written source document used by Mark, what was the correct textual context which preceded the text of Mk 3:21 within that source document? (It is premature to answer this question, but it will be answerable later in this Part 2.)

A study of the Markan duplicates and near-duplicates as represented with the above examples leads to an interesting hypothesis as to how Mark might have operated in constructing his gospel. Before the hypothesis can be stated succinctly a few words concerning terminology will be necessary. The term

“redaction” in New Testament studies refers to a form of editing in which multiple source texts are combined and altered slightly to make a single document. It is generally accepted by serious students of the New Testament that the authors of all of the canonical gospels engaged in redaction. But we see from the examples above that Mark, in constructing his gospel, may have “redacted” at times in a special way - by copying a fragment of text from a source document into an improper context in his gospel. (In the event that Mark also included the fragment within its correct context in his gospel the fragment would appear twice in his gospel, as a “duplicate,” and I will henceforth call such a fragment (in the incorrect context) a “misplaced copy.” In the event that he did not include the fragment in its correct context in his gospel, the fragment would simply be misplaced in his gospel and I will henceforth call it a “misplaced singleton.”) Let us agree to henceforth call such a redaction a “fragment placement alteration.” (The term “alterdaction” is used here

rather than “redaction” to emphasize that the effect of such a procedure is to significantly alter the meaning of what the author produces from what is indicated in his source documents.) Also, let us use the term “freehand redaction” to refer to textual fragments in Mark’s gospel which do not appear in any source document, but rather which he simply wrote down freehand. The hypothesis can now be stated succinctly. I will call it a “construction hypothesis” since it is a hypothesis about how Mark operated when he constructed his gospel:

Construction Hypothesis 1:

In constructing his gospel Mark sometimes engaged in fragment placement alteration.

Before investigating the explanatory power of Construction Hypothesis 1 (which, as we will soon see, is considerable), it will be useful to address the question, “Why would Mark do such a thing?” The answer may be related to the “moral prohibition”

expressed in the following passages:

Deut 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

Deut 12:32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shall not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Prov 30:6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Rev 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book.

Rev 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take

away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Didache 4:13 (see endnote 1) Do not by any means neglect the commandments of the Lord, but hold fast to the traditions, neither adding nor subtracting anything.

Note that none of the above prohibitions against “adding or subtracting” explicitly prohibits “moving things around.” Nor do any of them explicitly prohibit “faithfully copying the same thing twice.”

It is also helpful I think to consider the circumstances under which Mark was required to work as he created his gospel. As noted in Chapter 2, it appears that neither Secret Mark nor canonical Mark was produced prior to about 70 C.E. This was about forty years after the crucifixion. It is reasonable to suppose that Mark’s sources of information for his

gospel were to a considerable extent written documents based on eyewitness testimonies which often contained insufficient information as to the time and place of the events described therein. It would have been necessary for Mark, in presenting the information contained in his source documents in the form of a coherent narrative of the ministry of Jesus, to make decisions as to the order of the events described in his sources. He would have been required to move source documents around in order to achieve a conceptually coherent result. (He would also have been required to freehand redact in framing his testimonies within the larger context of the narrative.) It seems possible that this procedure led him to the procedure expressed in Construction Hypothesis 1. That is, Mark may have found it necessary, with some of his source documents, to abuse the process.

If Construction Hypothesis 1 is correct the gospel of Mark (including SMk 1 and SMk 2) can be considered to be something like a jigsaw puzzle. The

puzzle as assembled by Mark presents a certain picture, or interpretation. But close inspection reveals that the puzzle has been somewhat imperfectly assembled. Some of the pieces, when examined closely, are seen to be misplaced. Some of the misplaced pieces are copies of pieces which appear elsewhere in the puzzle, and some of them are misplaced singletons. This way of thinking about the gospel of Mark gives rise to an exciting possibility. If we proceed carefully, we may be able to identify and remove the misplaced copies as well as the framing freehand redactions and then try to insert the obviously misplaced singletons which remain into their original and correct positions. And if we do this, what might then be the picture which presents itself? The beginning of my own effort to do this, and the picture which begins to be revealed, are the subjects of the next chapter.

4

One Fragment Replacement

We begin with Secret Mark, quotation 1. We saw in the previous chapter that “Son of David, have mercy on me” in SMk 1:3 does not fit well into its context. Let us remove this fragment and place it in the trashcan labeled “misplaced copies.” The text which precedes this fragment in SMk 1 is:

SMk 1:1 And they come into Bethany.

SMk 1:2 And a certain woman whose brother had died was there.

SMk 1:3 And, coming, she prostrated herself before Jesus and says to him,

Part or all of this may be a framing freehand redaction of Mark. But part or all of it may be from a source document which contained an eyewitness testimony of the raising of Lazarus. Let’s leave this text where it is for the moment. Later we can de-

cide, possibly on the basis of better evidence than is now available, whether to place it in the tray labeled “Eyewitness Testimony of the Raising of Lazarus” or whether to place part or all of it in the trashcan labeled “framing freehand redactions of Mark.” (Note at this time however that John 11:32 suggests that the name of the “certain woman” is “Mary.”)

We next consider SMk 1:4:

SMk 1:4 But the disciples rebuked her.

This appears to be a Markan near-duplicate. Its pair, underlined below, appears in Mk 14:5 within the following context:

Mk 14:3 And, being in Bethany in the house of Simon the Leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

Mk 14:4 And there were some that had indignation

within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

Mk 14:5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

Mk 14:6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me.

(Note that John 12:1-7 suggests that the name of this woman was also “Mary” and that she was the same person who was referred to earlier in John 11:32.) The underlined fragment in Mk 14:5 seems to fit well with its context, but SMk 1:4 has a serious problem in this regard. The only plausible reason for which the disciples should rebuke the woman for her words or actions described in SMk 1 is that she has called Jesus “Son of David.” (This was a dangerous title for Jesus, as it would suggest to the ruling authorities that he was a potential military threat.) But the fragment “Son of David, have mercy on me,” the fragment which plausibly contextual-

ized SMk 1:4, was itself a misplaced copy and has already been removed. Let us remove SMk 1:4 and place it in the trashcan for misplaced copies.

We now consider SMk 1:5:

SMk 1:5 And Jesus, being angered, went off with her into the garden where the tomb was, and straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb.

I will call the part of SMk 1:5 which I have underlined “Fragment A.” There are several noteworthy things about Fragment A. First, the fragment which plausibly contextualized Fragment A, SMk 1:4, has already disappeared. (Jesus is apparently angry in SMk 1 because of the disciples’ rebuke of the woman.) Further, if we consider it a reasonable possibility that Jesus may have been angry because the woman called him “Son of David,” the fragment in which she did this has also disappeared. Second, it is out of character for Jesus to become angry at the

disciples for something which they have said and to simply walk away from them. He usually tries to teach them something. Third, nowhere in the account of the raising of Lazarus in John 11:1-44 does John tell us that the tomb of Lazarus was in a garden. Fourth, Fragment A is not a duplicate or near-duplicate of any other textual fragment in the gospel of Mark, including SMk 1 and SMk 2. It is a misplaced singleton which belongs somewhere else. It appears that Mark created the two preceding misplaced copies for the purpose of plausibly misplacing Fragment A.

Rather than placing Fragment A in the “misplaced singleton” tray and trying later to fit it in correctly somewhere, lets try to do this now. (This will save some time.) Consider the underlined text of Mk 14:51 within the larger context reproduced below:

Mk 14:43 And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the

chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

Mk 14:44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.

Mk 14:45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.

Mk 14:46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

Mk 14:47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Mk 14:48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me?

Mk 14:49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

Mk 14:50 And they all forsook him and fled.

Mk 14:51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body;

and the young men laid hold on him:

Mk 14:52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

Mk 14:53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

Let us call the above underlined text of Mk 14:51 “Fragment B.” If we set aside Fragment B for the moment and replace it in Mk 14:51 with Fragment A, the revised text of Mk 14:51-52 reads as follows:

And Jesus, being angered, went off with her into the garden where the tomb was, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

Let us try to evaluate the plausibility of this passage with respect to its context. Henceforth for the sake of brevity I will call it the HP (for “hypothe-

sized passage”). At first glance the HP appears not to be conceptually coherent with respect to its context. It tells us that shortly after Jesus was taken into custody by the people from the temple Jesus was observed to be doing something else. But there was only one Jesus. Recall however Koester’s suggestion noted in Chapter 1 that the purported author of the Gospel of Thomas, “Didymos Judas Thomas,” was the twin brother of Jesus. It is possible that there were two people perceived to be Jesus. If so, one of them (whom I will henceforth call J1) was taken into custody to be crucified while according to the HP the other (whom I will henceforth call J2) “went off into the garden where the tomb was” with a female, identified as “her,” as the followers of Jesus fled. (It seems unlikely that J2 “went off into the garden where the tomb was” after the followers of Jesus fled, since J2 was himself being pursued, it appears.)

In the first century there was a large cemetery immediately to the south of the Garden of Gethsemane

(and possibly overlapping the garden area), on the eastern slope of the Kidron Valley. There are yet a few structures remaining which were part of this cemetery. This is consistent with the HP.

The image of a man running naked from a tomb will be familiar to readers of canonical Mark. We have already looked briefly at the relevant passage, Mk 5:1-20, which appears near the beginning of the previous chapter. If we consider that part of the passage which is between the two vertical lines (one in Mk 5:2 and the other at the end of Mk 5:17), we appear to have an eyewitness testimony which, if we accept the HP, is much more plausibly placed in the Kidron Valley on the night of the last supper than where Mark has framed it (with the text outside of the vertical lines (see endnote 1)). For all of the bizarre features of this testimony as framed by Mark are now readily understood. It is a shocking interpretation, but it is conceptually coherent. And the interpretation itself has formidable explanatory power, as the reader may understand already. For the

sake of completeness it should be noted that the man described by the eyewitness as the “man with an unclean spirit” is J2. Among the reasons which point to this conclusion are:

a. The eyewitness states in Mk 5:4 that “neither could any man tame him.” Apparently the eyewitness saw J2 being pursued and nearly caught by the “young men” of the HP. (It seems most likely from their behavior that the “young men” were with the temple crowd that had come to arrest Jesus.)

b. The eyewitness states in Mk 5:4 that the man “had his dwelling among the tombs.” This is consistent with several items of information from the canonical gospels as well as with the HP. During the latter part of his ministry Jesus was a fugitive in Judea. The environs of Jerusalem were particularly dangerous for him. John 7:30, John 8:59 and John 10:39 report several near escapes by Jesus from physical apprehension at the temple in Jerusalem. It

is clear from the canonical gospels that when in Jerusalem during his ministry Jesus spent much of his time on the eastern side of the temple. Gethsemane would have been on Jesus' escape path, to the east, should flight have been necessary. In John 18:2 it is reported, concerning Gethsemane, that "Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." Confirmation, of a sort, comes from Luke 22:39, where we read that immediately after the Last Supper: "And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him." (Luke reports that Jesus was captured at the Mount of Olives, which is immediately to the east of Gethsemane, rather than at Gethsemane. I will discuss this slight but interesting discrepancy later.) The phrase "as he was wont" in Luke 22:39 is surprising in a synoptic gospel, since as was noted in Chapter 1 the synoptics do not in general suggest that Jesus spent much time during his ministry in Jerusalem. The point is that it is reasonable to assume that the tomb to which J2 went in the HP was

an unused tomb which had been pre-selected as a hideout and which Jesus had used before. The eyewitness who was the source of Mk 5:2-17 had seen him doing so and had concluded that J2 “had his dwelling among the tombs.”

c. The eyewitness also concluded, quite possibly for the above reason and even before the night of the Last Supper, that Jesus (or J2) was not “in his right mind.” This conclusion led the eyewitness to seriously misinterpret what he witnessed that night. But what he witnessed is quite clear to us, because of the HP. He witnessed J2 making stigmata on himself. (The “fettters broken in pieces” were tourniquets, of course. The other misinterpretations of the witness are suggested parenthetically in the “Testimony of an Anonymous Witness” in Part 1.) And two and a half days later J2 would present himself to the disciples, and he would display to them the marks of crucifixion.

At this point the HP has led us to an explanation of the resurrection of Jesus which does not require us to suppose that a supernatural event occurred. Scientifically-minded readers will appreciate this merit of the explanation.

Let us now consider the “her” of the HP. The HP does not tell us what happened to her, but we can figure this out. It is reasonable to think that she fled. Let us suppose that she fled before J2 lost his linen cloth and let us investigate the explanatory power of this supposition. It is reasonable to think that she would be worried about J2 and would return later to the tomb. (In view of Ex 12:22 and the points discussed in Miscellaneous Subject 13 of Chapter 6, it is also plausible to think that this would have been early the next morning - that is, early in the morning following the night of Passover.) And when she did return she would find the linen cloth which J2 had worn when she left him. Considering that during the night J2 had applied tourniquets to himself using the linen cloth which he had earlier worn, it is reason-

able to think that the woman would have found the linen cloth inside the tomb, where J2, again plausibly, would have taken it after the “young men” left. If J2 had been in the tomb when she fled, she would not have been able to imagine how J2 could have voluntarily left the tomb without his clothes, and she would have concluded that the temple people (whom she would almost certainly have known wanted to kill him) had killed him in the tomb and removed his body. She would then have returned from the tomb to report back to the other followers of Jesus. This will begin to sound familiar to readers of John 20:1-18, which is reproduced below (within John’s framing, of course, and including John’s freehand redactions and/or alterdactions). (Recall first that the name of the “certain woman” of SMk 1, the woman to whom the pronoun “her” was applied therein (and hence in the HP), is suggested in John 11:32 to be “Mary.”)

John 20:1 The first day of the week cometh Mary

Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

John 20:2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

John 20:3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

John 20:4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

John 20:5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

John 20:6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.

John 20:7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

John 20:8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

John 20:9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

John 20:10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

John 20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre.

John 20:12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

John 20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

John 20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

John 20:15 Jesus said unto her, Woman, why weep-

est thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardner, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

John 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

John 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and to your God.

John 20:18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

In writing the beginning of the third part of the Testimony of Miriam of Magdala in Part 1, after Mary's parenthetical comment about the vine, I simply copied that part of what happened to Mary Magdalene according to John 20:11-17, as it would have been told by her, in the first person. I recommend

that the reader line up the text of John 20:11-17 against the corresponding text of Part 1 (but excluding Mary's parenthetical comments, of course) and verify this striking circumstance. This is good evidence for the HP, I think. In particular, note Mary's statement at John 20:15. As I suggested parenthetically in Part 1, this statement is much more consistent with the "new interpretation" to which the HP has led us (which entails the understanding that the tomb of John 20 was a hideout) than it is with the "standard interpretation" that Jesus was buried in a proper tomb after being crucified. (This part of the "standard interpretation" is based on Mk 15:42-47. Crossan's opinion (see endnote 2) is that the followers of Jesus did not know what had happened to his body, and Mk 15:42-47 must have been fictitious. Although we will soon understand (if we do not already) that Acts 1:18 suggests that some of the followers of Jesus did know what happened to the body of the man who was crucified, I have found nothing in my own study to suggest a factual basis for Mk

15:42-47. Indeed, my own study provides evidence which is substantially in support of Crossan's opinion.)

Some of the differences, however, between John 20 and what we can infer with the help of the HP (and what I have included in Part 1) are significant. These are:

a. In John 20:1 John frames the testimony of Mary Magdalene presented in John 20 on Sunday morning, while Part 1 of this book, in consistency with the HP, frames it on Friday morning. John's framing follows Mark, from which the relevant passage is:

Mk 16:9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

It has long been suspected by New Testament scholars that Mark ended his gospel at Mk 16:8, just before the above verse, and that Mk 16:9-20 was a

later addition. (See endnote 3.) The reader can readily verify that the style of Mark changes abruptly after Mk 16:8. No more are the details passed on to us by the faithful copyist. Now we are provided only with the conclusions of the Grand Summarizer. Note that this author does not elaborate, in the above verse, on the first appearance of the risen Christ - the most important event of the New Testament to traditional Christianity. He does manage to say, however, that the event occurred on Sunday rather than on Friday. This produces an inconsistency with what John's account reports Jesus to have said to Mary Magdalene at John 20:17. As I suggested with a comment of Mary in Part 3 of her testimony in Part 1 of this book, Jesus is telling Mary that he has not yet died but will soon do so. This dates the event at Friday morning, for J1 would die on the cross as Jesus on Friday afternoon.

b. I have deleted, in Mary's testimony in Part 1, the reference to the stone which is at the end of John

20:1. With regard to the existence of such a stone, John follows Mark in this regard, at Mk 16:3-4 (which appears in the previous chapter). We will see later in Chapter 5 that Mark's textual references to the stone at Mk 16:3-4 were fragments imported from another context.

c. Our Mary of Part 1 looked into the tomb when she arrived. And she saw the linen cloth which J2 had worn when she left him, with blood on it. The Mary of John 20 didn't look into the tomb at John 20:1-2. Instead she ran away when she saw the stone taken away from the tomb. That she, having come back to the tomb to look for Jesus and if possible help him, should run away without looking into the tomb is beyond my own credulity. (Also, as noted above, the stone wasn't really there. If we eliminate the reference to the stone from John 20:1 Mary's reason for running away disappears.) Further, if Mary didn't look into the tomb it is quite implausible that she would have or even could have re-

ported, as per John 20:2, that “They have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre.” I believe it is reasonable to think that Mary looked into the tomb. But if so, why would John exclude this part of her testimony? We may suspect that there was something about what she said she saw when she looked into the tomb that induced John to delete completely the “looking in” statement from his gospel. Considering how J2 had spent the previous night, it is inconceivable that the cloth would not have had blood on it. And so we can reasonably surmise that the statement was approximately:

“Looking into the tomb I saw the linen cloth of the Master with blood on it.”

This “surmise” may cast light on one of the more opaque of the Lukan mysteries, which arises from Luke 22:44 within the context of Jesus praying at the “mount of Olives” shortly before being captured:

Luke 22:44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

It appears possible that this verse may have been created by Luke to discredit stories which circulated, in the Christian community of his own time (see endnote 4), that the linen cloth which Jesus had worn on that last night at Gethsemane had somehow gotten blood on it. But this is uncertain. Nevertheless the “surmise” explains something else that is more important. It explains, at least in part, why Mark ended his gospel at Mk 16:8. He did so because he couldn’t handle the bloody cloth. In the next chapter we will see that at the completion of Mk 16:8 Mary’s reference to the cloth would have been the very next statement which faced Mark, in his own source document, had he continued to distribute its text into his gospel. Note also that if Mary saw blood on the cloth when she looked into the tomb this would have given her even more reason

than what was noted earlier to believe that Jesus had been killed in the tomb;

d. In Part 1 Mary Magdalene reported only to Peter on Easter (Friday) morning, and only Peter ran to the tomb, while in John 20:2-10 Mary reported also to the “disciple whom Jesus loved,” and this other disciple also ran to the tomb. Lk 24:12 suggests that only Peter ran to the tomb. My own opinion is that John’s references to the “disciple whom Jesus loved” in John 20:2-10 were fictitious. (I have this opinion because a reconstructed document which we will see in the next chapter, which I will call D1, will provide good reason to believe that the “disciple whom Jesus loved” was in or in the vicinity of the tomb during all of the previous night. (John describes this person at John 21:24 as a source of his own information. D1 and several verses in John 11 will suggest that this person was Lazarus.) And this would not have been possible if John 20:2-10 were correct in its references to the “disciple whom Jesus loved.” It is

noteworthy I think that if the “disciple whom Jesus loved” incorrectly informed John that he ran to the tomb with Peter and arrived first then he would have had an answer to the question as to how he could have observed what Peter did at the tomb without stating that he had already been in the vicinity thereof since the previous evening.)

We have for the last few pages been considering the implications of the HP. This has led us to a “new interpretation” of what happened during the last few days of the ministry of Jesus. The new interpretation is conceptually coherent. Further, it has quite impressive explanatory power. (It even explains why the first canonical gospel to be written, the gospel of Mark, was not written until about forty years after the crucifixion. For the gospel of Mark could not have been written and made known among early Christians while a few key people, most notably Mary Magdalene, were still living witnesses.) Lets leave Fragment A where it is in the HP and move on.

We will find in the remainder of this Part 2, as we continue with the restoration of the “Markan jigsaw puzzle,” further confirmation of the new interpretation as developed so far. I wish to pause here however in order to make a point. I am afraid that this book will inevitably be considered to be a “controversial” book. I believe that the criticism will be made of my procedure in carrying out the restoration that “anyone can make the book of Mark say whatever he wants it to say by moving around enough small pieces.” This will seem to be a weighty criticism to those who have not read this book because it is, roughly speaking, a correct statement. Anyone certainly can make the book of Mark say pretty much whatever one wants it to say by moving around enough small pieces, especially if the pieces are very small and if one is allowed to throw away any leftover text which remains at the conclusion of the creative process. But no one can make the book of Mark say whatever one wants it to say with a single fragment replacement. And the “new interpreta-

tion” as developed to this point (but excluding the relatively subsidiary features thereof discussed in b and in d above) is the result of a single fragment replacement - replacing Fragment B in Mk 14:51-52 with Fragment A so as to obtain the HP.

Let us now consider the subject of the correct identities of J1 and J2. At this point there are at least three reasons for thinking that J2 was probably Jesus and J1 was his double. These are:

- a. If the person whom we have called J2 were the double of Jesus rather than Jesus, there would have been no apparent reason for him to be wearing a linen cloth as recorded in the HP, and therefore incorrectly perceived to be Jesus;
- b. If the Transfiguration miracle of Mk 9:2-10 was a conjuring effect, as is suggested in the Appendix, it appears that the double of Jesus, clothed in an impressive white garment, took his place briefly before the disciples. If one of the purposes of this effect

was to determine whether the closest disciples of Jesus, Peter and James and John Zebedee (Boanerges), could detect a difference in appearance between Jesus and his double, the answer was certainly in the affirmative. According to Mk 9:2 Jesus was “transfigured” before them. Because of this circumstance it would have been more practical for the double to present himself as Jesus to the Romans and temple authorities (who did not know Jesus well) rather than to the disciples (who did know him well.) In this case J2 would have been Jesus;

c. This study provides good reason to reject the historical accuracy of much of Mk 15:38-47. This is not the case, however, with respect to:

Mk 15:40 There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome:

We will see in the next chapter that “Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome” in Mk 15:40 above was the source of a Markan near-duplicate (for which the corresponding misplaced copy, “Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome,” is in Mk 16:1). It is therefore reasonable to think that Mk 15:40 was copied from a source document which Mark himself considered to be authentic. Also, the undramatic specification in Mk 15:40 that the women were “looking on afar off” (at the crucifixion of Jesus) seems more likely an account of a real world event than the product of a redactor’s imagination. (As an example of the latter, in John 19:25 John has Mary Magdalene and what he describes as two other women standing “by the cross.”) It appears that the women were led to stand “afar off” in order that they would not notice any small differences in appearance between J1 and Jesus.

However if we study Mk 14:43-50 which is reproduced above near the beginning of this chapter, it

does not seem possible that J2 rather than J1 was Jesus. For immediately after Judas Iscariot kisses Jesus in Mk 14:45 the people from the temple lay their hands on him at Mk 14:46. The swordplay occurs thereafter, at Mk 14:47. Although Matthew in Matt 26:49-51 follows Mark in this order of events Luke rather surprisingly does not. In Lk 22:50 one of the followers of Jesus lops off an ear of the servant of the high priest after Judas kisses Jesus but before Jesus is taken by the temple people. John also places the swordplay (in John 18:10) before the taking of Jesus (in John 18:12). In summary, two of the four canonical gospels state that Jesus was taken by the temple people after the swordplay. Since one of these, the gospel of Luke, is a synoptic gospel, generally dependent on Mark for the events and acts of the ministry of Jesus, I believe the balance of the evidence which is directly available in the canonical gospels indicates that the swordplay more likely occurred before, rather than after, J1 was taken. At the very least there is a reasonable possibility of this or-

der of events. Let us temporarily move Mk 14:46:

And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

down 3 verses, to a position between Mk 14:49 and Mk 14:50. (This is the same position relative to the swordplay and Jesus' subsequent "swords and staves" address as that specified by Luke.) And let us consider the explanatory power of this hypothetical and temporary fragment rearrangement.

The first thing which we notice from this rearrangement is that the followers of Jesus now have a more readily comprehensible reason for forsaking Jesus and fleeing, as reported in Mk 14:50, which is that their leader has just been captured. Before this rearrangement the followers of Jesus forsake him and flee immediately after his "swords and staves" address, which seems less plausible.

The second thing to be noted is that it is now possible, with the text of Mk 14:46 in its new position, that J2 was Jesus. To understand this requires us to

understand in a general sense a conjuring maneuver which I will call a “cloak switch.” Basically the maneuver is that two people secretly exchange places beneath a hooded cloak. There is at least one way by which such a thing could have been accomplished under cover of the misdirection provided by the swordplay. This method would have required that Judas Iscariot wear a hooded cloak with specially-constructed sleeves which was reinforced in the hood and shoulders so that it would hold its shape as Judas and Jesus exchange places beneath it. Jesus and Judas would have needed to practice the maneuver diligently beforehand in order to accomplish it swiftly and smoothly. A few months before this writing I asked the proprietor of what is probably the world’s largest supplier of conjuring apparatus and information if the plans for such a maneuver are available. He responded in the negative but, after asking for a description of the performing conditions (lighting, angles of view of the audience, and so forth), which I provided, he told me that the effect

could be accomplished. He indicated that the price for a custom-made cloak and detailed plans for the maneuver would be about \$18,000 to \$20,000. He also explained that the price would be this high because the cloak and plans would need to be custom made for the conjurer and the assistant.

The “cloak switch,” however accomplished, explains more than how it is possible for J2 to be Jesus. Specifically:

a. It provides a plausible explanation of the sword-play of Mk 14:47 (and of John 18:10, Matt 26:51 and Lk 22:50). Mark provides no explanation for this event, nor does Matthew. Luke provides the explanation, in Lk 22:35-38, that Jesus intended his disciples to have a couple of swords. In Lk 22:37 Jesus says:

For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have

an end.

It appears that the purpose of the swordplay in Luke is that Jesus be “reckoned among the transgressors” as prophecied in Isaiah 53:12. (Mark finds fulfillment of this prophecy at Mk 15:28, in that Jesus was crucified between two thieves.) After one of the disciples of the Lukan Jesus lops off the ear of the servant of the high priest Jesus touches the ear and heals the servant. John, on the other hand, presents the swordplay as an unplanned impetuous act of Peter, which Jesus discourages in John 18:11:

Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

The “cloak switch” provides, of course, the explanation for the swordplay that it served to distract the attention of the audience, particularly the crowd from the temple, during the switch;

b. It provides the only plausible explanation of the kiss of Judas, in betraying Jesus, of which I am aware. That is, it made plausible to the audience that Judas should embrace Jesus, which he actually needed to do in preparation for the cloak switch;

c. It is noteworthy that the cloak switch may help us to understand how the remarkable escape of Jesus from his antagonists at the temple which is reported at

John 8:59: They took up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by,

was accomplished.

If a non-supernatural means can be found to explain, or help us to understand, how two apparently miraculous events, rather than simply one, were ac-

complished, the plausibility of the explanation is enhanced for that reason, I believe;

d. Consider Gospel of Thomas Saying 7:

Jesus said, “Blessed is the lion that the human will eat, so that the lion becomes human. And defiled (or, more literally translated from the Coptic, cursed) is the human that the lion will eat, and the lion will become human.”

Marvin Meyer has written, with regard to Saying 7, that “This riddle-like saying remains somewhat obscure.” (See endnote 5.) But the “cloak switch” provides a clear interpretation of the riddle. To understand this it will be helpful to note a passage from the Epistle of Barnabas, an early Christian document which Kleist dates (see endnote 6) to 117-132 C.E.

Observe what He commanded: Take a pair of goats, shapely and like each other, and offer them;

and let the priest take the one for a whole burnt sacrifice for sins. But what are they to do with the other? The other, He says, shall be accursed - note how Jesus is prefigured by it! - and spit on it, all of you, stab it, and put scarlet wool about its head; and so let it be driven into the desert. And when this is done, he whose task is to carry off the goat, takes it into the desert; there he removes the wool and lays it on the shrub called bramblebush - the same whose fruits we are accustomed to eat when we find them in the field; so sweet are the berries of the bramblebush alone! Now what does this mean? Pay attention: the one is to be placed on the altar, the other to be cursed; and note that the one accursed is wreathed, because on that Day they are going to see Him wearing the flowing robe of scarlet, and they are going to say: "Is not this the one whom we once crucified and insulted and stabbed and spat upon? Yes, indeed, this is He who then declared Himself the Son of God!" And why is the one "like" the other? The reason why the goats were to be like each other,

shapely, and of equal build, is that, when they see Him coming on that Day, they shall be struck at the sight of His likeness to the goat. Observe, then, the type of Jesus, who was destined to suffer. But what does it mean that they place the wool among the thornbushes? It is a type of Jesus, intended for the benefit of the Church: since a thornbush makes one fear to touch it, it means that whoever would remove the scarlet wool is bound to suffer much and cannot secure it except through pain. Just so, He means, “those who wish to see me and take possession of my kingdom must possess me through affliction and suffering.” (See endnote 7.)

Crossan notes (see endnote 8) that there are also several passing references in the Mishnah, the rabbinical Oral Torah codified at the end of the second century C.E., to the sacrificing of two goats, alike and equal. This practice was apparently part of first century Judaic tradition. Its significance to early Christianity was expressed about the middle of the

second century in the following excerpt from the work of the early church writer Justin Martyr:

And the two goats which were ordered to be offered during the fast, of which one was sent away as the scape [goat], and the other sacrificed, were similarly declarative of the two appearances of Christ: the first, in which the elders of your people, and your priests, having laid hands on Him and put Him to death, sent Him away as the scape [goat]; and His second appearance, because in the same place in Jerusalem you shall recognize Him whom you have dishonored, and who was an offering for all sinners willing to repent, and keeping the fast which Isaiah speaks of, loosening the terms of the violent contracts, and keeping the other precepts, likewise enumerated by him, and which I have quoted, which those believing in Jesus do. And further, you are aware that the offering of the two goats, which was enjoined to be sacrificed at the fast, was not permitted to take place similarly anywhere else, but only in

Jerusalem. (See endnote 9.)

We can now interpret Gospel of Thomas Saying 7. The lion is the Roman Empire (and the Godless world in general). The human who will consume the lion is Jesus, and the lion will be blessed thereby. For in being consumed by Jesus the lion will become human. That is, the Roman Empire (and the Godless world in general) will become humanized. And the defiled (or cursed - see endnote 10) human who will be consumed by the lion is Judas. And the lion will become human.

The above discussion of the “cloak switch” began with a temporary replacement of Mk 14:46 to a position immediately before Mk 14:50, so that the swordplay occurs before J1 is taken into custody. Although this placement of Mk 14:46 records what is, for the reasons discussed above, a plausible order of events, we cannot conclude therefrom that Mk 14:46 actually occupied this later position in a hy-

pothesized Markan source document. It is quite possible that Mark's eyewitness source of Mk 14:46 simply erred in the testimony given as to the correct order of the events reported. There is therefore insufficient reason to justify this hypothesized fragment replacement in a hypothesized Markan source document. That the order of events suggested thereby is correct will however receive additional support in the next chapter, which will yield additional evidence that J2 was Jesus.

5

The Complete Restoration

In the last chapter I described the beginning of my own restoration of the “Markan jigsaw puzzle.” In this chapter, in the interest of brevity I will present my conclusions at the completion of the restoration process. In order to facilitate their analysis and, if necessary, correction by serious students of the subject, I will present these conclusions in the form of several hypotheses. I will call them “Document Hypotheses” since they are hypotheses about the source documents which were available to Mark when he wrote his gospel. I will then demonstrate how Mark distributed the text of the hypothesized documents into his gospel (including SMk 1 and SMk 2). For ease of reference the demonstration is given in the form of several “Distribution Hypotheses.”

Document Hypothesis 1:

The following text was contained in a document

(henceforth Document 1, or D1 for short) which was available to Mark when he constructed his gospel. D1 is presented as a sequence of numbered fragments. These fragments are the pieces into which Mark broke up D1 as he incorporated it into his gospel:

Fragment 1: And Jesus, being angered, went off with her into the garden where the tomb was,

Fragment 2: wearing a linen cloth over his naked body;

Fragment 3: And there followed him a certain young man.

Fragment 4: And the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

Fragment 5: And when his friends heard of it, they

went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

Fragment 6: And straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb.

Fragment 7: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit. There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

Fragment 8: And the sister of the youth whom Jesus loved and his mother and Salome were there, and Jesus did not receive them.

Fragment 9: But the youth, looking upon him, loved him and began to beseech him that he might be with him.

Fragment 10: Then Jesus beholding him loved him.

Fragment 11: Jesus told him what to do, and in the

evening the youth comes to him.

Fragment 12: And he remained with him that night, for Jesus taught him the mystery of the kingdom of God.

Fragment 13: And going out of the tomb they came into the house of the youth.

Document Hypothesis 2:

The following text was contained in a document (henceforth Document 2, or D2) which was available to Mark when he constructed his gospel. The eye-witness source of D2 was Mary Magdalene:

Fragment 1: And as I was entering the tomb, I saw a young man.

Fragment 2: And I went out quickly, and fled from the tomb; for I was afraid: neither said I any thing to any man; for I trembled and was bewildered.

Fragment 3: And very early in the morning of the next day I came to the tomb at the rising of the sun.

Fragment 4: [Approximately] And looking into the tomb I saw the linen cloth of the Master with blood on it.

Document Hypothesis 3:

The following text is from the document (henceforth D3) which was Mark's source of Mk 6:29. The testimony which D3 records was given at the tomb of John the Baptist:

And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

Fragment 1: Behold the place where they laid him.

Fragment 2: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth.

Fragment 3: He is not here.

Fragment 4: But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Document Hypothesis 4:

The document (henceforth D4) which was the source of Mk 14:3 contained the following text:

there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious,

Fragment 1: that she might come and anoint him,

and she brake the box and poured it on his head.

Document Hypothesis 5:

One of the source documents of Mark's gospel (henceforth D5) contained the following text. This

text was the source of some of Mk 3:20 and of Mk 3:32:

Fragment 1: And the multitude cometh together again,

Fragment 2: And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

Document Hypothesis 6:

The following text is from the document (henceforth D6) which was the source of Mk 10:20-21:

Fragment 1: And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus

Fragment 2: said unto him,

One thing thou lackest:...

Document Hypothesis 7:

The document (henceforth D7) which was the source of Mk 6:22 contained the following text:

And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in,
and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat
with him

Fragment 1: on the right side,

the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever
thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

Document Hypothesis 8:

The document (henceforth D8) which was the source of Mk 5:6 contained the following text:

But when he saw Jesus afar off,

Fragment 1: clothed in a long white garment,

he ran and worshipped him,

Document Hypothesis 9:

The document (henceforth D9) which was the source of Mk 9:33 contained the following text:

And he came to Capernaum:

Fragment 1: And they went into an house,

and being in the house he asked them...

Document Hypothesis 10:

Among the documents available to Mark when he constructed his gospel was an eyewitness account of the raising of Lazarus. This document (henceforth D10) included the following fragments:

Fragment 1: And they come into Bethany. And a certain woman whose brother had died was there.

And, coming, she prostrated herself before Jesus and says to him,

Fragment 2a: And we said among ourselves, who shall roll away the stone from the door of the tomb?

Fragment 2b: For it was very great.

Fragment 3: and going near Jesus, rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb.

Fragment 4: And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away.

Document Hypothesis 11:

The following text was contained in a document (henceforth D11) which was available to Mark when he constructed his gospel. (The subject of D11 is clearly an event which occurred after the crucifixion.):

Fragment 1: which was crucified

Distribution Hypothesis 1:

Mark constructed Mk 14:51-52 as summarized below:

Text of Mk 14:51-52

And there followed him a certain young man,
(Source: Fragment 3 of D1)

having a linen cloth cast about his naked body;
(Source: Fragment 2 of D1)

and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the
linen cloth, and fled from them naked.
(Source: Fragment 4 of D1)

Distribution Hypothesis 2:

Mark constructed SMk 1 as summarized below:

Text of SMk 1

And they come into Bethany. And a certain woman whose brother had died was there. And, coming, she prostrated herself before Jesus and says to him,
(Source: Fragment 1 of D10)

“Son of David, have mercy on me.”
(Source: “...Son of David, have mercy on me.” in Mk 10:47)

But the disciples rebuked her.
(Source: Parallel (see endnote 1) of “And they murmured against her.” in Mk 14:5)

And Jesus, being angered, went off with her into the garden where the tomb was.
(Source: Fragment 1 of D1)

And straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb.

(Source: Fragment 6 of D1)

And going near, Jesus rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb.

(Source: Fragment 3 of D10 (note that Mark moved the comma))

And straightaway, going in where the youth was, he stretched forth his hand and raised him, seizing his hand.

(Source: “and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand.” in Mk 5:40-41, “And straightway the damsel arose,” in Mk 5:42, and “But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.” in Mk 9:27)

But the youth, looking upon him, loved him and began to beseech him that he might be with him.

(Source: Fragment 9 of D1)

And going out of the tomb they came into the house

of the youth,
(Source: Fragment 13 of D1)

for he was rich.
(Source: “for he had great possessions” in Mk
10:22)

And after six days
(Source: “And after six days” in Mk 9:2)

Jesus told him what to do, and in the evening the
youth comes to him,
(Source: Fragment 11 of D1)

wearing a linen cloth over his naked body.
(Source: Fragment 2 of D1)

And he remained with him that night, for Jesus
taught him the mystery of the kingdom of God.
(Source: Fragment 12 of D1)

And thence, arising, he returned to the other side of the Jordan.

(Source: Framing freehand redaction of Mark)

Only four fragments of D1 remain to be incorporated into Mark's gospel. These are Fragments 5, 7, 8 and 10.

Distribution Hypothesis 3:

Mark distributed Fragments 5 and 7 of D1 between Fragments 1 and 2 of D5, constructing thereby what became Mk 3:19-32 as follows:

Text of Mk 3:19-32

And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him:

(Source: The source document of Mk 3:13-18)

and they went into an house.

(Source: Fragment 1 of D9)

And the multitude cometh together again,
(Source: Fragment 1 of D5)

so that they could not so much as eat bread.
(Source: “and they had no leisure so much as to eat”
in Mk 6:31 and “insomuch that there was no room to
receive them, no, not so much as about the door:” in
Mk 2:2)

And when his friends heard of it, they went out to
lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.
(Source: Fragment 5 of D1)

Mk 3:22-29

(Source: Mark’s source for the “Beelzebub accusa-
tion” and Jesus’ response to it)

Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit. There
came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing
without, sent unto him, calling him.
(Source: Fragment 7 of D1)

And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

(Source: Fragment 2 of D5)

Distribution Hypothesis 4:

Mark inserted Fragment 10 of D1 between Fragments 1 and 2 of D6, producing thereby what became Mk 10:20-21, as follows:

Text of Mk 10:20-21

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus
(Source: Fragment 1 of D6)

beholding him loved him,
(Source: Fragment 10 of D1)

and said unto him,

(Source: Fragment 2 of D6)

One thing thou lackest: ...

(Source: D6)

Distribution Hypothesis 5:

Finally, Fragment 8 of D1 was distributed by the creation of SMk 2:

Text of SMk 2

And the sister of the youth whom Jesus loved and his mother and Salome were there, and Jesus did not receive them.

(Source: Fragment 8 of D1)

Distribution Hypothesis 6:

Mark constructed Mk 16:1-8 as follows:

Text of Mk 16:1-8

And when the sabbath was past,
(Source: Framing freehand redaction of Mark)

Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James,
and Salome

(Source: “Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of
James the less and of Joses, and Salome;” in Mk
15:40)

had brought sweet spices,
(Source: Parallel (see endnote 2) of “there came a
woman having an alabaster box of ointment of
spikenard very precious,” from Mk 14:3)

that they might come and anoint him.
(Source: Fragment 1 of D4)

And very early in the morning the first day of the
week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of
the sun.

(Source: Fragment 3 of D2 (Note that Mark

changed “of the next day” to “the first day of the week,” in conformity to his freehand framing of this passage))

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?
(Source: Fragment 2a of D10)

And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away:
(Source: Fragment 4 of D10)

for it was very great.
(Source: Fragment 2b of D10)

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man.
(Source: Fragment 1 of D2)

sitting
(Source: “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind:

and they were afraid” in Mk 5:15)

on the right side,

(Source: Fragment 1 of D7)

clothed

(Source: The text in Mk 5:15 noted above)

in a long white garment,

(Source: Fragment 1 of D8)

and they were affrighted.

(Source: The text in Mk 5:15 noted above)

And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted:

(Source: “And...he...saith unto them...be not afraid” in Mk 6:50)

Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth,

(Source: Fragment 2 of D3)

which was crucified:

(Source: Fragment 1 of D11)

he is risen;

(Source: “he is risen” in Mk 6:16)

he is not here:

(Source: Fragment 3 of D3)

behold the place where they laid him.

(Source: Fragment 1 of D3)

But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

(Source: Fragment 4 of D3)

And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

(Source: Fragment 2 of D2)

The only numbered fragment of Documents 1-11 which remains undistributed is Fragment 4 of Document 2. As I noted in the previous chapter, I believe that Mark ended his gospel at Mk 16:8 at least in part because Fragment 4 was the next problem which would have faced him if he had continued to distribute the text of D2 thereinto.

6

Miscellaneous Subjects

1. I believe that many readers, having studied the last chapter, will be impressed, as I have been, by the degree of Mark's aversion to even light freehand redaction (except when framing). For this reason two of the conclusions of the previous chapter bear particularly close scrutiny. These are:

a. The source of "But the disciples rebuked her" in SMk 1 is listed as a "parallel" of "and they murmured against her" in Mk 14:5.

b. The source of "had brought sweet spices" in Mk 16:1-8 is listed as a "parallel" of "there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious" from Mk 14:3.

It seems uncharacteristic for Mark to have been willing to freehand redact to the extent which would

have been necessary had he obtained the above two fragments simply by freehand redaction of the source document for Mk 14:3-5. It is noteworthy in this regard that both of the above source fragments refer to the same event. I believe that Mark was in possession of another source document besides that for Mk 14:3-5, based on the testimony of a different eyewitness, which described approximately the same event (or sequence of events) as did that for Mk 14:3-5. (I will henceforth call such a document a “parallel” document.) And I believe that the parallel document, rather than that for Mk 14:3-5, was actually the source of “had brought sweet spices” in Mk 16:1-8. Similarly, I believe that of the two fragments “But the disciples rebuked her” and “and they murmured against her,” one was copied from that for Mk 14:3-5 and the other from the parallel document.

2. I believe that parallel source documents are also the source of the twin “sea miracles” of Mk 4:35-41 and Mk 6:45-52 as well as the twin “bread and fish

miracles” of Mk 6:31-44 and of Mk 8:1-9. I don’t know if these are new suggestions, but my reasons for making them are new. These reasons are:

a. The “Fragment of Testimony of James Boanerges” in Part 1 is the product of my own effort to reconstruct the sequence of events which might have been the source of the twin Markan sea miracles, under the assumption that the source documents underlying Mk 4:35-41 and Mk 6:45-52 were parallel documents. The “explanation” which emerges (with one of the eyewitnesses being a “seaman” and the other a “landsman”) is, I believe, plausible.

b. I believe that Jesus only publicly performed the “bread and fish” miracle once. I do so because of my own experience as a conjurer (for the purpose of magical entertainment.) As every magic buff quickly learns, it is unwise to perform the same effect twice before the same audience (unless the method of achieving the effect the second time is different.)

(It is unwise because the audience, knowing what to expect at the second performance, will be more resistant to the misdirection of the conjurer. Also, some of them will notice that apparently incidental and unimportant things which happened at the first performance happened in exactly the same way, and at the same time, at the second. Reflection on this circumstance will lead some of them to at least a partial understanding of the method used to achieve the effect.) And it appears that some of the disciples of Jesus were among the “audience” of the bread and fish miracle.

3. Document Hypothesis 3 and Distribution Hypothesis 6 explain one of the inconsistencies in the canonical gospels and Acts concerning where the disciples went after the resurrection. According to Mk 16:7 they were instructed to go to Galilee. Matthew, in Matt 28:16, says that the disciples did so. So does John, in effect, at John 21:1. But Luke, at Lk 24:52-53, suggests that they remained in

Jerusalem for some time. And according to Acts (which as is well known was written by Luke) the disciples were commanded by the resurrected Jesus in Acts 1:4 to not depart from Jerusalem. And there they remained, according to Acts 1-2, through Pentecost, seven weeks later. Document 3 and Distribution Hypothesis 6 make it clear that the text of Mk 16:7 does not record a real event, except within the context of D3 whence it was imported as Fragment 4. Note in this regard Mk 14:27-29:

Mk 14:27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

Mk 14:28 But after that I am arisen, I will go before you into Galilee.

Mk 14:29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

D3 and Distribution Hypothesis 6 suggest strongly

that Mk 14:28 is a freehand redactional insertion for the purpose of making Mk 16:7 more plausible.

Viewing Mk 14:28 with respect to its context, this appears to be the case, as Mk 14:27-29 reads more smoothly without Mk 14:28 than with it. We cannot conclude however that Mark made this freehand redaction (more precisely, alterdaction). It may be the product of a later hand.

4. In Chapter 4 several reasons were given in support of the conclusion that the “man with an unclean spirit” (or the “Gadarene Demoniac”) of Mk 5:2-17 was J2 (whom we were later able to identify as Jesus.) The reasons given in Chapter 4 for this conclusion are I believe substantial. Because of the shocking and undoubtedly controversial nature of this conclusion, however, it is appropriate to note here that additional evidence in support of the conclusion is supplied by D1 and D8 of Chapter 5. Specifically:

a. Both the Gadarene Demoniac of Mk 5:2-17 and

Jesus in D1 are described, in two different source documents, as having an “unclean spirit” (or being so perceived), on the same night, and at the same place, according to the “new interpretation” of Chapter 4;

b. The Gadarene Demoniac is described as having “had his dwelling among the tombs,” while in D1 Jesus is clearly described as being in “the tomb” for quite awhile;

c. The Gadarene Demoniac is described as “crying, and cutting himself with stones,” while in D1 the same activity is strongly suggested by Fragment 6: “And straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb,” and again on the same night and at the same place according to the new interpretation;

d. The interpretation that the “fetters broken in pieces” of the Gadarene Demoniac were tourniquets is supported by Fragment 11 of D1: “Jesus told him

what to do and in the evening the youth came to him.” Apparently the “youth” of D1 helped Jesus in applying the tourniquets. (This would be difficult for a person with stigmata in his hands to do without help;)

e. The information supplied by D8 that the man thought to be Jesus by the eyewitness source of Mk 5:2-17 was clothed in a long white garment is consistent with the interpretation that the eyewitness did not know what Jesus looked like and so took the historical Jesus for the “man with an unclean spirit.” (It is worth noting I think that when writing the original version of the “Testimony of an Anonymous Witness” in Part 1 I first intended to use the parenthetical text

(I knew it was Jesus for his raiment was shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.) (Which I obtained from Mk 9:3.)

but which I later revised to

(I knew it was Jesus for he was clothed in a long white garment.)

I began writing this book upon reconstruction of the HP of Chapter 4. When I wrote the original version of the “Testimony of an Anonymous Witness” I had realized from the HP and what it apparently implied that the man perceived by the eyewitness to be Jesus was apparently dressed in an impressive white costume. In consideration of the information supplied by the Transfiguration miracle of Mk 9:2-10 and by Mary Magdalene’s testimony of John 20:12 it appeared most likely that some of Jesus’ helpers were in possession of at least three impressive costumes, at least two of which were white and were in the locale of the tombs early the next morning. (The silk road from China was in operation in the first century and silk would have been available to wealthy people in Judea. But it was so expensive

that it was probably unfamiliar to ordinary people.) If the man perceived to be Jesus were wearing such a costume Mk 5:6 would be more plausible, since the “man with an unclean spirit” of Mk 5:6 would more plausibly be able both to see and to recognize “Jesus” from “afar off” at night. (There would have been a full moon that night, since the first day of Passover was celebrated on the fifteenth day of the month Nisan in the Judaic calendar and this month, like the others, began at the new moon.) I suspected that a reference to this costume had been deleted from the vicinity of Mk 5:6. And this is why I included the first version of the above parenthetical comment in the “Anonymous Witness” testimony of Part 1. At that time I believed that “sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted” of Mk 16:5 was simply a lightly freehand redacted copy of “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid” in Mk 5:15. About two months later, after completing more of the restoration, I realized that the Mk 16:5 text was

probably more “rigidly” constructed than I had previously supposed, and so I began searching for the proper homes of the fragments “on the right side” and “in a long white garment.” Two of the more satisfying steps of the restoration was finding exactly one plausible place in Mark’s gospel for each fragment. Most satisfying was finding the plausible place for “in a long white garment” at Mk 5:6, the same place where I had previously suspected such a description had once been.)

5. Consider Gospel of Thomas Saying 99:

The disciples said to him, “Your brothers and your mother are standing outside.” He said to them, “Those here who do the will of my Father are my brothers and my mother. They are the ones who will enter the kingdom of my Father.”

Of particular interest to this Part 2 is the term “standing outside” in Saying 99, as this information

is not in D5 although it is consistent with Mk 3:31, in which the mother and brothers of Jesus are described as “standing without.” I believe that this is an instance of “scribal harmonization;” that is, the incorrect transcribing of a text (in this case, Gospel of Thomas Saying 99) by a scribe in order to bring it into closer conformity with a known parallel text (in this case Mark’s gospel, probably the canonical version). As Patterson points out (see endnote 1), this phenomenon is well known among text critics, particularly with regard to the gospels of the Coptic translational tradition.

6. In view of 5 above, and because in some ways it fits pretty well in D5 immediately before Fragment 2 thereof, some readers may wonder whether “There came then his brethren and his mother and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him” from Fragment 7 of D1 originated instead from D5 at that position. But if so, “standing without” would no longer make sense. (The reference to the house in Mk 3:19 was

an imported fragment. Further, “standing without” cannot plausibly be interpreted as “standing outside the circle of the seated multitude,” since the reference to the seated multitude in Fragment 2 of D5 (and of Mk 3:32) would occur after, rather than before, the “standing without” of Fragment 7 (and of Mk 3:31).) The sequence Mk 3:31 followed immediately by Mk 3:32 also seems implausible because the eyewitness source of Mk 3:31 would apparently have been “outside” and able to see the mother and brothers of Jesus standing, while the witness who was the source of Mk 3:32 would have been “inside” and able to hear what is reported therein, and therefore would apparently have been a different witness.

7. Let us compare Mk 1:23-25 with Mk 5:7-9:

Mk 1:23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

Mk 1:24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to

destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

Mk 1:25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

versus

Mk 5:7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

Mk 5:8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

Mk 5:9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is legion: for we are many.

Note that if in the first passage we replace each of the two instances of “us” with “me” and the “we” with “I”, while in the second passage we replace each of the two “I”s with “we” and the “me” by “us”

both of the revised passages make more sense than do those above. (There was supposedly only one unclean spirit in the man in the synagogue while there were supposedly a plurality of “devils” in the “man with the unclean spirit” of the second passage.) In my opinion the singular and plural personal pronouns in these two passages were interchanged by an alterdactor. Because of the nature of the hypothesized alterdaction I believe that Mark was probably the alterdactor. Note that the hypothesized alterdaction has the effect of suggesting in the first passage an antagonistic relationship between Jesus and the people in the synagogue. This suggestion seems more likely that of a Christian of the 70’s or later, such as Mark, than that of the man in the synagogue at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. (And this is so whether or not one believes that the man in the synagogue was a “secret helper” of Jesus, which I suggested in the “Testimony of Stephen of Capernaum” in Part 1.) Because this hypothesized alterdaction is independent of the fragment placement al-

terdactions summarized in Chapter 5, however, there is less confirmatory evidence for this thesis than for the conclusions summarized in Chapter 5.

8. As of this writing it is a not uncommon opinion among New Testament scholars that the ministry of Jesus was a rather ad hoc affair which ended unexpectedly in the crucifixion. Cadbury wrote, for example, concerning this subject, “My impression is that Jesus was largely casual. He reacted to situations as they arose but probably he had hardly a program or a plan,” (See endnote 2.) The picture which emerges from this study suggests quite the opposite. Consider for example that Judas Iscariot apparently disguised himself or hid his face from the other followers of Jesus during his entire participation in Jesus’ ministry.

9. In Part 1 I have suggested that Judas Iscariot so disguised himself with a red beard and red hair, with the assistance of his mother, who was also the moth-

er of Jesus. This suggestion was based on the following circumstances:

a. It was commonly believed during the middle ages that Judas Iscariot had red hair and a red beard;

b. There is an apparent reference (see endnote 3) in the early rabbinic literature to the mother of Jesus as a “hairdresser;”

c. There is a suggestion, in the same reference noted in b above, that Jesus had spent some of his adult life in Egypt before his ministry;

d. Henna, which can be used as a red hair dye, grows wild in various places in the Middle East, including Egypt, where the art of cosmetology was relatively advanced in the first century C.E.

Although I do not think we can draw a conclusion on this point, the circumstances noted above are

consistent with the possibility suggested.

10. Our Mary Magdalene of Part 1 hid her eyes and did not see J1 taken into custody. It seems unlikely that the historical Mary Magdalene hid her eyes and did not see J1 taken into custody. And her “trembling and bewilderment” and her abstaining from saying any thing to any man recorded in Fragment 2 of D2 were apparently the consequence of a realization that Jesus intended his followers to think he had been taken into custody. (I approximated this situation in Part 1 by having Jesus gesture to Mary before he entered the tomb that she should be silent.) What happened to the historical Mary Magdalene after the crucifixion is not known with certainty or even reasonable certainty. I placed her near Jerusalem when she wrote her “Letter to an Unknown Reader” in Part 1 for reasons unrelated to historical likelihood.

11. In Part 1 I have suggested that Jesus had secret helpers during his ministry, some of whom were un-

known to most of his disciples. There is substantial evidence for this in the canonical gospels. For example:

a. Mk 11:1-6 relates an interesting incident as follows:

Mk 11:1 And when they came nigh unto Jerusalem, unto Bethpage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

Mk 11:2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

Mk 11:3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

Mk 11:4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

Mk 11:5 And certain of them that stood there said

unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

Mk 11:6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

Note that it would be impossible for the two “disciples” or any reader of Mark’s source document for the above text to deduce who had supplied the colt to Jesus or even approximately where they lived, other than that it was apparently in the vicinity of Bethany;

b. Consider Mk 14:12-16, which in Mark’s gospel is a prelude to the Last Supper:

Mk 14:12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover/

Mk 14:13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: fol-

low him.

Mk 14:14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Mk 14:15 And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

Mk 14:16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

In 16 below we will see that it is possible that the source text of much of Mk 14:13-16 was a prelude to Pentecost rather than to the Last Supper. Whether or not this is so, it is clear that the man with the pitcher was a secret helper of Jesus.

12. In *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* Morton Smith notes (see endnote 4) that Ebeling had raised the question in 1939 how the title “Son of David” for Jesus got into the mouth of the

beggar Bartimaeus outside Jericho (in Mk 10:47) with the confidence that this problem would be historically insoluble. The new interpretation produced by this study suggests however a rather simple solution, which is that Bartimaeus said this because Jesus (or a helper) had asked him to say it, and he had been asked to so address Jesus in public exactly in order that Jesus would be regarded as a threat by the governing authorities in Jerusalem (if he was not already so regarded).

13. In Part 1 I suggested that since J1 was taken into custody on the night of Passover none of the temple priests came out themselves to assist in taking him. This is I think a reasonable suggestion in View of Ex 12:22, which explicitly prohibits the followers of Mosaic law from going out of doors on the night of Passover. (My primary reason for suggesting that J1 was taken on Passover night is that Mark makes this clear at Mk 14:12-16, which is reproduced in 11 above. Similar accounts are given in Matthew at

Matt 16:17-19 and in Luke at Lk 22:7-13. John, however, implies clearly (at John 13:1-2, John 13:29, John 18:28, John 19:14, John 19:31 and at John 19:42) that the Last Supper occurred before the seder. He appears to be implying in these verses that the seder that year occurred on Friday night. This implication would make the Gospel of John more useful to early Christian proselytizers who wished to represent Jesus to prospective Jewish converts as the “Paschal Lamb,” as the paschal lamb was sacrificed shortly before the seder.)

14. In Mark’s “Gadarene Demoniac” story, in Mk 5:1-20, is the verse

Mk 5:5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

If the “new interpretation” of this story is correct the above text, “always, night and day” cannot be literal-

ly true, since J2 would have been so observed only on a single night. Although I have not been able to completely eliminate the possibility of an alteration (either “fragment placement” or “freehand”) at this point in Mark’s gospel, I think it is more likely that the eyewitness source of the testimony given simply erred in recollection on this point. (The eyewitness would have observed Jesus engaged in unconventional behavior in the tombs and the higher ground to the east, in the Mount of Olives, during an extended period of time prior to the night of the Last Supper, but he only observed the particular form of unconventional behavior noted in Mk 5:5 during a single night. Later, when giving his testimony, this distinction was blurred in his recollection.) This is consistent with the suggestion presented by the new interpretation that the witness was not very reliable. (The witness drew several incorrect conclusions without the help of either “Jesus” or the “man with an unclean spirit.”)

15. One of the apparently more difficult questions posed by the Gospel of Mark concerns the identity of the person referred to in Mk 15:40 as “Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses.” In Mk 6:3 we read that two of the brothers of Jesus were “James” and “Joses.” The question arises as to whether the mother of Mk 15:40 was also the mother of Jesus. If the answer is “yes” the next question, which is “Why doesn’t Mark say this at Mk 15:40?” is apparently unanswerable. But if the answer is “no” the next question, which is “Why doesn’t Mark clarify this at Mk 15:40?” is also apparently unanswerable. In Part 1 I have suggested a solution to this problem, which is that the mother of Mk 15:40 was indeed the mother of Jesus but that the eyewitness source of Mk 15:40 didn’t know this at the time the testimony was given. (And Mark, decades later, simply copied the source document description into his gospel.) This is consistent with what I think can be discerned as a deliberate obscuring of his familial relationship with his mother by Jesus at the “water

into wine” miracle of John 2:1-11, at the beginning of his ministry (and which I suggested in the “Letter of Ruth of Cana” in Part 1). It is also consistent with the otherwise odd circumstance that the mother of Jesus is hardly mentioned in the canonical gospels during Jesus’ ministry but seems to acquire a prominent position in the early Jesus movement soon after the crucifixion, as is noted in Acts 1:14.

16. There is something interesting about the path taken by Jesus and the “disciples,” according to the gospel of Mark, from the place of the Last Supper to Gethsemane. At the conclusion of the Last Supper, Mark tells us

Mk 14:26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

And following the conversation between Jesus and primarily Peter which is reported in Mk 14:27-31 we read

Mk 14:32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

Mk 14:33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

Mk 14:34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

Mk 14:35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

What is interesting is that if they started from a “large upper room” in Jerusalem, as reported at Mk 14:15-16, they would have needed first to move in an easterly direction to go “out into the mount of Olives” as in Mk 14:26 and then apparently turn around and move west to come to Gethsemane. (Gethsemane is close to the mount of Olives but west of it.) And this doesn’t make a lot of sense.

Further, if we interpret “the mount of Olives” of Mk 14:26 as a general description of the ground east of the brook Kidron, including Gethsemane, there is still a problem. This problem arises from Mk 14:35, which tells us that Jesus went “forward a little.”

Since Jesus was closer to the temple crowd when it arrived than were his disciples, and since the crowd came from the temple to the west, Jesus was apparently west of the disciples at that time. It appears that the “forward” of Mk 14:35 meant “west.” And this appears to imply that Jesus and the disciples were moving west, and not east, when they arrived at Gethsemane. In my opinion this is evidence that they came from Bethany rather than Jerusalem.

Matthew incorporated this problem into his own gospel, as his own information on this subject is virtually the same as that provided by Mark. (See Matt 26:30, Matt 26:36 and Matt 26:39, which are identical to or very close to Mk 14:26, Mk 14:32 and Mk 14:35 respectively.) It seems that Luke was aware of the problem and eliminated it rather cleverly from

his own gospel. Immediately after his last reference to the Last Supper Luke writes:

Lk 22:39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

Lk 22:40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

Lk 22:41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed.

Note that Luke does not mention Gethsemane at all, and at Lk 22:40 he refers to “the place” without specifying that the place was Gethsemane, leaving the impression that “the place” was simply the mount of Olives. (In fact the mount of Olives is a pretty big “place.”) Note also that at Lk 22:41 he simply tells us that Jesus “was withdrawn from them” without specifying that he had gone “forward.”

Nor does the problem arise in the gospel of John,

where we read, immediately after the Last Supper

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

And John does not tell us that Jesus moved away from the disciples in the garden until the crowd from the temple arrived, at which point John tells us, at John 18:4, that Jesus “went forth.”

If the Last Supper did occur at Bethany, rather than in Jerusalem, how does Mark manage to tell us that it occurred in Jerusalem? If we view Mk 14:13-16 with respect to Acts 1:12-13 we see that much of the Markan text fits roughly, but not perfectly, between Acts 1:12 and Acts 1:13. Also, something seems to be missing immediately before Acts 1:13, which begins: “And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room,...” without telling us

what it was that “they” had come into. My suggestion here is that Mark’s description of where the Last Supper was held may have come from a source document which described the meeting described by Acts 1:12-26 (and also Pentecost, if this meeting and the meeting at Pentecost coincided, which is not perfectly clear); and Luke, recognizing this, omitted some of his own source text which belonged between Acts 1:12 and Acts 1:13 (and which would have been an obviously similar description to that given in Mk 14:13-16).

In Part 1 the Last Supper occurred in Bethany. This reflects my own opinion that the Last Supper probably did occur there. It would have been much safer to have had the Last Supper there rather than in Jerusalem. And this, of course, would explain the peculiarity noted above of the Markan path from the place of the Last Supper to Gethsemane.

17. Before approaching the last subject of this chapter I would like to make some summary comments

here about the “plausibility” of the conclusions of this Part 2 through Chapter 5 thereof, which is the core of what I suppose I should call my “theory.” Clearly the question of such plausibility should be, and must be, a question to be carefully considered by any serious student of the historical Jesus. While the redactional characteristic of Mark proposed in Construction Hypothesis 1 of Chapter 3, his usage of fragment placement alteration, is quite new, the very newness of the notion is not, on methodological grounds, a valid reason for rejection. My own view, which I invite the reader to consider, is that there is overwhelming evidence in support of the theory. Specifically:

a. Any new theory in any discipline of human knowledge is best evaluated by its explanatory power. This theory has enormous explanatory power. It explains all (at least eleven) of the Markan duplicates and near-duplicates. It also provides the only answer to date for the following question: “There is

an unusually high frequency of components of Markan duplicates and near-duplicates within both SMk 1 and Mk 16:1-8. Is there a common explanation of this common feature of these two passages?" The answer provided is "Both passages were created as concatenations of misplaced fragments." It also explains several heretofore recognized but not satisfactorily explained Markan oddities (such as the sudden reference to the "house" in Mk 9:33, the apparent inappropriateness of the phrase "Then Jesus beholding him loved him" in Mk 10:21 within its Markan context, and the oddness of Mk 14:51-52 within its Markan context). It also explains other peculiarities in the gospels which have not to my knowledge been heretofore noted in the literature of New Testament Studies but to which the theory itself draws one's attention (such as Mary Magdalene's statement "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away" in John 20:15, which is consistent with the "new interpretation" but inconsistent with the "standard in-

terpretation,” and such as a number of minor oddities in SMk 1 and in Mk 16:1-8 which the reader can perceive simply by reviewing these passages with the Chapter 5 hypotheses in mind as to how they were constructed. One example which will do for this summary is the oddness of “and straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb” in SMk 1:5 within its Markan context in SMk 1, which suggests that the youth in the tomb came back to life a bit prematurely, before Jesus had drawn near to the tomb). It also provides a comprehensible interpretation of the ancient and otherwise puzzling Christian ritual of the “Judas of the Paschal,” that is, the candle at the top of a very long pole, or “Judas stick,” which is raised thereby nearly to the ceiling of the church, and which is lit during Easter services. The other explanatory features of the theory which are noted in Chapters 3 and 4 would in addition make a fairly long list. (I exclude here the explanatory features of Chapter 6 only to simplify somewhat the central question, which is the plausibility of the Ch

3-5 results.)

b. This theory has a noteworthy quality of conceptual coherence. For example, the new interpretation developed in Chapter 4 provides a consistent interpretation of the following four passages:

- i. D1 of Chapter 5;
- ii. The “Gadarene Demoniac” testimony of Mk 5:1-20 (but with the core testimony framed in the Kidron Valley on the night of the Last Supper, in accordance with the new interpretation, rather than where Mark has framed it);
- iii. D2 of Chapter 5;
- iv. John 20:11-17.

In comparison the canonical Easter stories in Mark and John appear on their face to be hopelessly and quite mysteriously inconsistent. But the theory also provides considerable insight as to how this inconsistency arose. (It allows us to see in detail in Chapter 5 how Mark constructed Mark 16:1-8, and it also

gives us a pretty good handle on understanding how John constructed his own Easter story, based on the insight that John 20:11-17 is a literally correct record of a testimony of Mary Magdalene, but of an encounter which occurred on the morning of Good Friday (and before the crucifixion) rather than two days later on Sunday morning.)

c. I anticipate that some detractors of this theory will raise the charge that the conclusions of Chapters 3 through 5 are the product of my own subjective imagination rather than an apprehension of an objective reality. I anticipate this charge because it has the advantage of the *ad hominem* argument in directing the attention of the audience away from the theory itself and toward the proponent thereof, which is a useful debating tactic if the theory itself is not readily assailable. But the charge nevertheless merits a response. First, I do not think that my imagination is nearly good enough to produce an explanation of the Easter story with the coherence not-

ed above. That the “new interpretation” which yields this explanation arose concurrently with and as a byproduct of the fulfillment of my own central objective, which was a complete solution to the problem of the Markan duplicates, is for me a source of confidence. But there is more that should be said regarding the “subjective imagination” charge. I invite the reader with a serious interest in this question to review Chapter 3 (where my own work begins) and to try to find some point therein at which my own imagination might have kicked into overdrive. The reader will find I believe that with interestingly high frequency one of the component fragments of a Markan duplicate or near-duplicate appears not to fit well into its context. Construction Hypothesis 1 is a relatively unimaginative attempt to explain this pattern. And the program of reconstruction outlined in the last paragraph of Chapter 3 is suggested, again quite unimaginatively, by Construction Hypothesis 1. The legitimacy and reasonableness of attempting to “reverse” the effect of recognized or hypothesized

redactional tendencies of canonical gospel writers to thereby gain improved insight as to source information is accepted by the majority of New Testament Studies professionals.

Some serious students of this subject may wonder, on the other hand, whether subjectivity entered into the results of this study somewhere between the last paragraph of Chapter 3 and the Chapter 5 conclusions. I do not think that this is an unreasonable concern. There is much new material in Chapter 4 which is developed in part from considerations which are new (and necessarily so) to New Testament studies. I recommend that anyone who has this concern try to carry out the restoration proposed in the last paragraph of Chapter 3 and try to produce a coherent restoration which differs significantly from my own. I do not think that anyone will ever be able to do such a thing. I have myself tried to do this, that is, to come up with alternatives to the Chapter 5 conclusions, and I have been able to do this thing in only one way. I must add that I did feel some free-

dom in the restoration with regard to the correct relative order of Fragment 6 of D1 and the first sentence of Fragment 7 of D1, and it is conceivable that I have erred in my own conclusion on this point, but except for this I have felt no freedom at all in carrying out the restoration. It has been very much like restoring a physical jigsaw puzzle in that it works in one way but does not even come close to working in any other significantly different way. This can be appreciated by anyone who tries to discredit the theory by producing a significantly different coherent restoration which accounts for the Markan duplicates. I do hope that many try, for I believe that many will then be able to appreciate the essential uniqueness of the Chapter 5 results. (I do not exclude the possibility that such an endeavor may bring to our attention a misplaced singleton which I have missed in the Ch 5 conclusions. Misplaced singletons which are not adjacent to misplaced copies in the Markan record are not necessarily easy to find. I have of course scoured Mark in order to

find them all, but this process has not led me to certainty that I have indeed found them all. A reader who tries to discredit this theory may be able to improve it.)

d. Although my own study began with an examination of the Markan duplicates, it is clear in retrospect that a study yielding the same results might have been undertaken with, as a starting point, Prof. Crossan's "strong suspicion," which he expressed (see endnote 5) in *The Historical Jesus*, that SMk 2 appears to be part of an account of a censored incident. For if this possibility is taken as a proposition it is but a short and unimaginative distance to consideration of the proposition that "Mark sometimes engaged in fragment placement alteration." Exploration of this leads, again quite unimaginatively, to the program outlined in the last paragraph of Chapter 3. Another path to the same point might have begun with the observation that "and they went into an house" in Mk 3:19 looks very nice in Mk

9:33. My point is that I believe there is a quality of “inevitability” to the central conclusions of this study which is, for me, a source of confidence.

18. We consider finally the life of the historical Jesus after Pentecost. It seems reasonable to suppose that he remained in the vicinity of Jerusalem, probably in the home in Bethany, during most or all of the interim period between his going “into the house of the youth” of Fragment 13 of D1 and Pentecost, seven weeks later. We will see in the appendix that there is some reason to believe that there was a secret compartment, or secret room, within the Bethany home. After Pentecost, however, less is reasonably reconstructable from the evidence heretofore considered. History tells us nothing directly about this, of course, as of this writing. And so it is necessary to engage in a bit of conjecture. After the religion he had founded was on its own legs it would have been prudent for Jesus to move away from Jerusalem, away from Judea, and beyond the reach

of the Roman Empire. That is, it would have been prudent for him to move east. As to how he might identify himself, If Judas Iscariot was an identical twin whose true name was Judas it would have been most prudent for Jesus to identify himself as Judas, his own twin brother. This would best serve as an identity if he were seen by someone who had known him before his ministry (and who knew that he had a twin brother named Judas), and it would also best serve as an identity if he were seen by someone who had known him during his ministry (who may or may not have known that he had a twin brother, but who certainly would not have known that Judas Iscariot was his twin brother). And so, recalling end-note 8 of Chapter 1, I arrive at my own conjecture, with which I am pleased to conclude this chapter and this Part 2:

Conjecture 1:

The original author of the Gospel of Thomas, the person who identified himself as Didymos Judas

Thomas, was the historical Jesus.

Appendix For Part 2

Jesus and the Art of the Conjuror

If we study the Transfiguration miracle reported in Mk 9:2-9, we note the following features of the event reported:

1. It occurred at a place of Jesus' choosing, a place to which he brought the three disciples;
2. The place at which it occurred was remote and high up (or in) a mountain;
3. It occurred at a time of Jesus' choosing.

In that branch of human activity known as “conjuring,” or what is nearly the same thing nowadays, “magical entertainment,” one of the very early things the student learns is that large-scale illusions cannot feasibly be presented to an audience unless:

1. The illusion occurs at a place of the conjurer's choosing. Usually this is on a stage. The audience

comes and sits where they're told to sit, in front of the stage.

2. Preparation for the illusion must be made beforehand and under conditions which allow for such preparation away from the prying eyes of the public

3. The illusion occurs at a time of the conjurer's choosing. The preparation referred to above must be complete. Equipment must be properly prepared and assistants properly rehearsed and ready to play their roles in flawless coordination. (A magical illusion is a fragile thing. A small mistake can ruin the entire effect.) Practically speaking, what this implies is that nobody can make an elephant, or even a large dog, vanish at a moment's notice. (See endnote 1.)

We see that that these three requirements were fulfilled for the Transformation miracle. They were also fulfilled for the bread and fish miracle of Mk 6:30-44. (They were also fulfilled for the bread and fish miracle of Mk 8:1-9, but as I indicated in Chapter 6, I believe that this was simply a second account of the same event reported at Mk 6:30-44.) They

were also fulfilled for the raising of Lazarus as described in John 11:1-44. They were also fulfilled, as nearly as the ambiguous and abbreviated description in Acts 1:12 through Acts 2:4 allows use to deduce, for the “sound and fire” event of Pentecost. (If the possibility suggested in Miscellaneous Subject 16 of Chapter 6 is correct, and Mark’s description in Mark 14:13-16 of how the disciples found the “large upper room” for the Last Supper was actually a description of how the disciples found such a room for the gathering at Pentecost, all three conditions were certainly fulfilled. Indeed, we are expressly told in Mk 14:15 that the room the disciples were led to was “prepared.”) Such requirements may not seem of any importance to the general public, but to the conjurer the fulfillment of these requirements are the tracks of another conjurer. (See endnote 2.)

Another tell-tale mark of the conjurer is his skill at acquiring, holding and controlling the attention of the audience. Today, knowledge of such skill can be obtained by reading in the literature of conjuring

about “showmanship” and “misdirection.” Both of these are large subjects. “Showmanship” is in part about attracting the interest of as large an audience as possible prior to the presentation, capturing and holding the attention of the audience during the presentation, and also taking steps to ensure that the greatest possible impression is made on the audience, and the general public, by the presentation. Indications of Jesus’ skill at “showmanship” were given in Part 1 by:

1. The circumstance related in the “Letter of Ruth of Cana to her sister Rachel” that Jesus arranged for the governor of the wedding feast to reveal authoritatively and dramatically to all present that the water had indeed become wine;

2. The circumstance related in the “Testimony of Stephen of Capernaum” that Jesus dramatically healed the “man with an unclean spirit” in the presence of the entire synagogue in Capernaum (with the

consequence, noted in Mk 1:28, that “immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee”);

3. The circumstance related in the “Testimony of Chemya of Capernaum” that, because the man suffering from a palsy entered Peter’s home by being lowered through the roof, every person in the great crowd witnessed his condition prior to the miracle, as they would have if the event had been presented in an amphitheater;

4. the circumstance related in the “Testimony of Binyamin of Jericho” that because Bartimaeus cast away his garment before approaching Jesus his healing was witnessed by pretty much everyone on the road that day, notwithstanding that Bartimaeus was simply a poor and unimportant beggar.

“Misdirection” is about directing the attention of the audience away from the place where, if it rested,

would allow the audience to comprehend, at least in part, the means by which the “magical effect” was accomplished. There are various kinds of misdirection. For example:

1. Physical misdirection: This is in itself a very large subject. Its breadth and its utility to the conjurer can be effectively conveyed here with a description of the beginning of a magic performance which contemporary conjurers might call a “stand up one coin routine.” Suppose the conjurer, standing in front of the audience, has a silver dollar in his right hand. He holds it up and to the right, at about ear level, while he turns his head to the right and studies its edge, while holding its face to the audience. (This directs the attention of the audience to the dollar. In general the attention of the audience will follow that of the conjurer.) Then he smoothly performs a “coin pass” while apparently placing the dollar casually in his left hand. (The “coin pass” is a category of “sleight,” or secret maneuver, which allows the con-

jurer to retain a coin in one hand, in this case the right hand, while apparently transferring it to the other hand. There are many methods for performing a coin pass.) At this point, if the sleight was executed smoothly, with no hesitation and no tensing up by the conjurer at the moment of execution (which would “telegraph” to the audience that “something tricky has happened”), the coin is in the conjurer’s right hand but the audience believes it is in his left. But the conjurer’s work is not finished, for he must now secretly dispose of the coin. To do this effectively he must misdirect the attention of the audience from his right hand while he disposes of the coin therein. Let us suppose that the conjurer has a flapless pocket on the right side of his coat. As he performs the coin pass he turns his upper body from his right to his left, while following the apparent path of the coin with his own eyes. In a smooth continuation of this motion he brings his closed left hand (which is apparently holding the coin) to about eye level at his left, holding his left arm so that his el-

bow points to the left, while he turns his head to the left and studies his raised left fist. His eyes widen a bit, as he apparently tries to peer into his closed left hand, and his upper torso tilts a bit to the left as his whole attention is drawn in this direction. All of these details of his performance serve to direct the attention of the audience to his left. They are all applications of physical misdirection. Immediately after the coin pass, while he is still turning to the left and beginning to give these misdirectional cues to the audience, the conjurer first points to his left fist with his right index finger as the other closed fingers of his right hand conceal the coin therein. (The pointing is, of course, another physical misdirection cue.) Then, as he continues his turn to the left, his right arm lowers naturally towards the pocket on his right side as he holds the coin in “thumb palm” position. (That is, he clips the top of the dollar between his thumb and the base of his forefinger. It is easy to get the coin into thumb palm position because of the earlier pointing gesture.) As he is completing his

turn to the left, his right hand guides the dollar into his right coat pocket, drops it therein, and then immediately comes up again as he again points to his closed left fist. The conjurer's misdirection as he drops his right hand to his pocket, leaves the coin therein, and then brings his right hand up again to point again at his left hand will be strongest if, while studying his left fist, he actually tries to see the "coin" in his closed left hand, and even imagines that he sees it there. He must, in a nearly literal sense, "not let his left hand know what his right hand is doing." (See Gospel of Thomas Saying 62.) If he concentrates his own attention on his left hand, very few of the audience will be aware that his right arm has dropped briefly to his right side between the two pointing gestures, and no one in the audience, except the conjurers, will be looking at his right hand as it disposes of the coin. The conjurer can then continue his performance in many ways. He may for example, while continuing to study intently his closed left fist, flex it as though "squeezing the coin away" and

then, in an aesthetically pleasing way, open his left hand to reveal that the dollar has vanished. He can then casually show his now empty right hand in a gesture toward the empty left hand. The illusion that he has vanished a silver dollar will be close to perfect. If he now slowly brings his open right hand to his left breast pocket, reaches gingerly therein with thumb and forefinger, grasps the upper edge of a silver dollar which he has had the foresight to place there before the performance, and slowly extracts the dollar from his pocket, while looking very pleased with himself, the audience will conclude that this is the dollar which has just vanished, and they will credit the conjurer with great skill. (The effect described above could, in some presentational contexts, be improved if the conjurer provides, in his verbal presentation, a plausible reason to the audience that he should transfer the coin from his right hand to his left. Provision of such a plausible reason is an application of “intellectual misdirection.” The “squeezing the coin away” bit is also an application

of a particular kind of intellectual misdirection called “temporal misdirection;” that is, it leads some in the audience to believe that the “magical event” occurred after the real business was taken care of. Production of the second dollar in a way which suggests to the audience that it is the same dollar which has vanished is another example of intellectual misdirection.)

In Part 1 I suggested and in Part 2 I concluded that the purpose of the “swordplay” at Gethsemane during the “cloak switch” was misdirectional. I have not encountered in my own studies of the art of conjuring (which extend over many years) a stronger application of physical misdirection than having an assistant assault the audience with a lethal weapon during a delicate moment of the conjurer’s performance.

In the “Testimony of Philip at Hierapolis” in Part 1 I suggested how Jesus might have used physical misdirection to give his followers the impression

that he had miraculously appeared “in their midst” as reported at John 20:19 and “in the midst of them” as reported at Lk 24:36. The point of the suggestion is not that this is how it was actually done. (There are not enough recorded details to be able to reconstruct the actual event.) The point was that such an illusion could have been presented with a little physical misdirection. I intentionally used the crudest form of physical misdirection imaginable (a scratching at the window) in order to help the reader understand the effectiveness of this conjuring tool.

At John 20:19 we read that the above event occurred “when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews.” In the Johannine “second appearance” at John 20:26 the condition “the doors being shut” is again recorded. I believe it is reasonable to conclude that there was a secret compartment, or secret room, in the home at Bethany where I believe the “miraculous appearance” of John 20:19 occurred. (I am inclined to disbelieve the historicity of the “second appearance”

recorded in John because, as I noted in Miscellaneous Subject 2 of Chapter 6, it is unwise for a conjurer to perform the same effect twice before the same audience.)

I also included, in the “Testimony of Philip at Hierapolis” of Part 1, a possibility as to how the Ascension, as reported at Mk 16:19, Lk 24:51 and Acts 1:9 might have been accomplished. There is not enough detail about this in the canonicals and in Acts to reconstruct anything more than a “plausible guess.” In the Ascension of the “Testimony of Philip” of Part 1 Jesus used physical misdirection in looking up before the disciples close their eyes, thereby directing their attention upwards. Under the conditions described in that “testimony” Jesus could have left the circle of his followers when their eyes were closed by crawling quietly between the slightly spread legs of his brother James as James delivered the prayer, and he could have then returned to the secret compartment, or secret room, within the Bethany home. (If another “secret helper” besides

James were present and next to James, holding his hand in the circle, it would have been even easier for Jesus to leave, by simply passing between them.)

2. Intellectual misdirection: A few examples of this form of misdirection were noted above in 1. Employment by Jesus of this conjuring tool during his ministry as recorded in the canonical gospels is succinctly illustrated with a couple of examples:

a. If an audience sees leftover bread and fish fragments piling up out of a basket which is two feet deep, they are intellectually directed to conclude that the basket is full of bread and fish fragments to a depth of two feet. But if there is a false bottom inserted in the basket which is only two inches deep, on which the bread and fish fragments rest, the audience will be thereby intellectually misdirected, for the basket is in fact nearly empty. Let us suppose that they have been directed to sit down, as per:

Mk 6:39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

Mk 6:40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

The leftover fragments could then be collected by one or some of Jesus' disciples carrying the false-bottomed baskets among the multitude company by company. Since the people in each company could be reminded to remain seated as the disciple or disciples walk among the people of that company collecting the leftover fragments, none of the people in that company would be able to look down into the top of a basket going by and thereby perceive that the basket is only two inches deep on the inside.

b. If a large, heavy and impressive stone lies over the entrance to a tomb which was a cave, as in Jesus' raising of Lazarus as reported in John 11:1-44 and in the fragments which we have of D10, such an impressive seal would direct the intellectual attention

of the audience away from the possibility that there is a second entrance to the cave.

3. Emotional misdirection: A notable application of this form of misdirection in the canonical gospels is evidenced by use of the phrase “What do I (or we) have to do with you:”

a. by Jesus, when speaking to his mother immediately before the water into wine miracle at John 2:4;

b. by the “man with an unclean spirit” when speaking to Jesus at the synagogue at Mk 1:24; and

c. by the “man with an unclean spirit,” or the “Gadarene Demoniac,” when speaking to “Jesus” at Mk 5:7.

In each of the above instances of the use of the phrase the effect on the audience was, I believe, to lead them to feel that the person speaking was in op-

position to, or alienated in some sense from, the person being addressed. And there is independent evidence, in each of the above three cases, that the two people were in fact working together. (I suggested this evidence in Part 1, in the “Letter of Ruth of Cana” for a. above and in the “Testimony of Stephen of Capernaum” for b. above; further, the “new interpretation” of the Gadarene Demoniac passage of Mk 5:1-20 provides good reason to draw this conclusion in the case of c.)

I believe that many critics of this book will find the notion that the person who died on the cross for all of us was Judas Iscariot to be simply “unthinkable.” I hope the reader can recognize that this reaction is a consequence of what is possibly the most effective application of emotional misdirection in all of human history.

In 1978 the late Morton Smith, who the reader will recall was the discoverer of Secret Mark, wrote *Je-*

sus the Magician. (See endnote 3.) In this book Prof. Smith tried to make the case that the historical Jesus was a magician. But the term “magician” as used by Prof. Smith could have been more accurately expressed by him as “sorcerer.” There is an important difference in meaning between the terms “sorcerer” and “conjurer.” As of this day there are still, I believe, “sorcerers,” “juju-men,” “witch-doctors,” “brujos,” “shamans” and so forth in undeveloped parts of the world who use amulets, magic spells, tattoos, drugs and such things to inflame the imagination of the local and usually not very well-educated population, largely by psychological means. But this is not conjuring. As of this writing I believe that the majority of serious students of the New Testament do not find Prof. Smith’s evidence and arguments in support of his thesis to be convincing. (There is nonetheless a wealth of interesting information in his book, and I recommend it enthusiastically to serious students of the historical Jesus.) I believe that Prof. Smith’s book would have been

even more interesting and his conclusions, somewhat modified by clarification of the term “magician,” more strongly supported by the available evidence if he had been an amateur magical entertainer as well as a professor of ancient history. Such a hobby can be especially useful I think to serious students of the New Testament, in addition to its other rewards. As an example, in *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* Smith concludes (see endnote 4), after comparing the “raising of Lazarus” account of SMk 1 with that of John 11:1-44, that the version in SMk 1 is of more primitive form, and therefore earlier (and, presumably, closer to the historical event) than the version in the gospel of John. Of course we see at this time that Prof. Smith was seriously misled here, since SMk 1 was a concatenation of misplaced fragments, primarily from D1. But if Prof. Smith had compared the two accounts of the raising of Lazarus using the criterion of “showmanship” it would have been clear I think that the account in John is much more plausible than is that

of SMk 1. (According to SMk 1 Jesus goes into the tomb, apparently alone, and brings Lazarus to life. The audience size is very small, if there is an audience at all. In John, however, Jesus does not enter the cave. Instead Lazarus appears at the entrance thereof, bound hand and foot with graveclothes, before an apparently large group of people.)

Endnotes for Part 2

Chapter 1:

1. Kloppenborg et al [6],
2. Kloppenborg et al [6], 77ff
3. Kloppenborg et al [6], 85-88
4. Kloppenborg et al [6], 91
5. See for example Crossan [2], 371-2. Crossan points out that, among other problems with the Matthean and Lukan Christmas stories, not only was it the Roman custom to record its subjects for the purpose of taxation by place of domicile or work, rather than by place of ancestry or birth (as per Luke 2:3), but also that the latter procedure would have constituted a bureaucratic nightmare.
6. Smith [8], 1. M James' *The Apocryphal New Testament* prints fragments of some twenty lost works about Jesus and references to many more of which only titles are known. See [8], 2.
7. Kloppenborg et al [6], 92
8. Kloppenborg et al [6], 91. The main character of the Acts of Thomas (which is of ancient Eastern Syrian provenance, specifically of the vicinity of Edessa) is named "Judas Thomas, who is also called Didymos." According to the Acts of Thomas its main character, who is presented as Jesus' identical twin (and is addressed therein as "a man that hast two forms"), migrated to

India, where he was martyred.

Chapter 2:

1. Smith [9]
2. Crossan [2], 412. The original quotation is from Helmut Koester, “History and Development of Mark’s Gospel (from Mark to Secret Mark and ‘Canonical’ Mark)”, *Colloquy on New Testament Studies; A Time for Reappraisal and Fresh Approaches*, edited by Bruce Corley (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. Press, 1983), 56-57
3. Crossan [2], 429-430
4. Crossan [2], 329
5. Crossan [2], 415
6. It will follow from what we learn in this study that Secret Mark was constructed before Canonical Mark.

Chapter 3:

1. The *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, is a very early Christian document which some scholars date, if not in whole at least in part, to as early as 60-70 C.E. Many scholars date it to before the end of the first century. It provides a view of the attitudes, values, expectations, rituals and organization of a very early community of Christians. The quotation is from Kleist [5], 18.

Chapter 4:

1. It is possible that the text of Mk 5:18-19, exclusive of “And

when he was come into the ship” in Mk 5:18, is part of the eyewitness testimony rather than of Mark’s framing. But in my opinion the text “prayed him that he might be with him” in Mk 5:18 was imported by Mark (from what we will call later, in Chapter 5, “Fragment 9 of Document 1.”) And this makes it most likely, again in my opinion, that all of Mk 5:18-19 was Mark’s framing.

2. See Crossan [2], 394.

3. See for example [4], 190.

4. According to Crossan the gospel of Luke was written “possibly as early as the nineties.” See [2], 431.

5. Meyer [7], 71. I think he is saying that he doesn’t have a clue what it means.

6. Kleist [5], 31-32

7. Kleist [5], 47-48

8. Crossan [2], 379

9. Crossan [2], 379. The original quotation is from Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*.

10. The earlier Greek Oxyrhynchus Fragment Poxxy 654 is also more plausibly translated, or reconstructed here, as “cursed” rather than “defiled.” See for example [6], 157. See also Deut 21:23.

Chapter 5:

1. This term is explained at the beginning of the next chapter.

2. See Endnote 1 immediately above.

Chapter 6:

1. Kloppenborg et al [6], 86
2. Cadbury [1], 141
3. Smith [8], 47
4. Smith [9], 164
5. But Crossan considers only the possibility that Clement was the censor. Crossan [2], 414

Appendix for Part 2

1. It is possible of course to create and present an illusion that such a thing happens at a moment's notice.
2. Technically they are the tracks of an illusionist. An illusionist is a conjurer who specializes in large-scale effects.
3. Smith [8]
4. Smith [9], 152, 158

References for Part 2

1. Cadbury, H.J. (1937), *The Perils of Modernizing Jesus*, New York: MacMillan.
2. Crossan, J.D. (1992), *The Historical Jesus*, San Francisco: HarperCollins.
3. Crossan, J.D. (1998), *The Cross That Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative*, San Francisco: Harper & Row.
4. Douglas, J.D. (1990), *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndall House.
5. Kleist, J.A. (1948), *Ancient Christian Writers*, New York: Newman.
6. Kloppenborg, Meyer, Patterson and Steinhauser (1990), *Q Thomas Reader*, Sonoma, CA: Polebridge.
7. Meyer, M.W. (1992), *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus*, New York: HarperCollins.
8. Smith, M. (1978), *Jesus the Magician*, San Francisco: Harper & Row.
9. Smith, M. (1973), *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

PART 3

A GOSPEL OF JESUS

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

—from John 8:31-32

1

Who wrote the Gospel of Thomas?

At the end of Part 2 the conjecture was expressed that the historical Jesus was actually the author of the Gospel of Thomas. Let us examine whether there is internal evidence within the gospel itself in support of the conjecture. Consider

Saying 1: And he said, “Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death.”

The pronoun “he” in Saying 1 is plausibly interpreted as Jesus, the speaker referred to in the Prologue: “These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Didymos Judas Thomas recorded.” But “he” is also plausibly interpreted as the writer of the gospel and the presenter of “these sayings” to which “he” refers. If we do not merely suppose that this gospel was clumsily written at its very outset we must consider the possibility that the ambiguity here

is intentional, therefore significant and in need of resolution as a first step in understanding the gospel. If each of the “plausible interpretations” noted above is treated as correct, the inescapable conclusion is that Jesus wrote the Gospel of Thomas. Let us express it as a proposition:

Proposition 1: The historical Jesus was the author of the Gospel of Thomas.

This proposition is very helpful in permitting us to understand the gospel. We note immediately that it allows us to understand that the expression “will not taste death” in Saying 1 originates from the spiritual authority Jesus, while it also allows us to understand why “the interpretation” rather than “the interpretations” is used in Saying 1 itself. That is, the reference is to a single consistent interpretation of the entire collection of the sayings which constitute the gospel rather than to particular interpretations of the sayings considered individually - each possibly

made in a distinct context - in the collection. But this is only the beginning of the usefulness of Prop.

1. Consider the next saying:

Saying 2: Jesus said, “Let one who seeks not stop seeking until one finds. When one finds one will be disturbed. When one is disturbed, one will be amazed, and will reign over all.

No object is included in this saying for the transitive verb “seeks.” The saying is not meaningful until it is augmented to include such an object. In view of the immediately preceding invitation (in Saying 1) to the student to discover “the interpretation of these sayings” and the point made above that a reference to the gospel itself resides in this quoted expression, we are led to the following “grammatical augmentation” of the first sentence of Saying 2:

Jesus said, “Let one who seeks the meaning of this gospel not stop seeking until one finds it.”

For what else might one who accepts the invitation of Saying 1 plausibly be seeking if not “the interpretation of these sayings,” that is, the meaning of the gospel?

The implicit reference to the gospel itself is particularly easy to find in Saying 2 (if we accept Proposition 1 of course, without which the possibility of such an implicit reference would be unthinkable). But it also alerts us to the possibility that implicit references to the gospel itself may also be found in some of the later sayings thereof. Let us express this insight as a proposition:

Proposition 2: Implicit references to the Gospel of Thomas may be found in some of the sayings thereof.

Proposition 2 is of critical importance in understanding the meaning of a number of sayings of this

gospel. A few of the more obvious are Sayings 5, 10, 17, 41 and 66. Specifically, consider

Saying 5: Jesus said, “Know what is before your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed.”

What is before your face when you read this saying in the Gospel of Thomas is, of course, the gospel itself. And so Saying 5 is telling us

Know this gospel, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed,

which makes considerably more sense than does the uninterpreted saying. (We will look further into this saying in Chapter 3.)

Consider next

Saying 10: Jesus said, “I have cast a fire upon the world, and see, I watch over it until it blazes.”

The inclusion of “and see” in this saying is mysterious. The mystery vanishes if we employ Proposition 2 to augment the saying as follows:

Jesus said, “I have cast a gospel of fire upon the world, and see, I watch over the gospel until it blazes.”

Note that as one reads Saying 10 of the gospel interpreted as above Jesus is inviting the reader to see that he watches over the gospel. When one can do this I believe that one will have made significant progress in understanding the spiritual message therein.

Consider next Saying 17.

Saying 17: Jesus said, “I shall give you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no hand has touched, what has not arisen in the human heart.”

Propositions 1 and 2 suggest the following interpretation of this saying:

Jesus said, “I shall give you what no eye has seen (the Gospel of Jesus, which your eye has not yet seen, although it is before you), what no ear has heard (my message for you, which your ear has not yet heard, for you do not yet know that this is my gospel), what no hand has touched (the gospel of the founder of your religion, which your hand has not yet touched, for you do not yet know that this is my gospel), what has not arisen in the human heart (me - Jesus - who is already in you; but this you do not know, for you do not yet know that this is my gospel; and I have not yet arisen in your heart, for you do not yet know that this is my gospel).”

Consider next Saying 41.

Saying 41: Jesus said, “He who has something in his hand will receive more, and he who hasn’t (that thing), even the little that he has will be taken from him.”

Proposition 2 suggests the following interpretation:

Jesus said, “The Christian who has my gospel in his hand will receive more than traditional Christianity has to offer, and the Christian who does not have my gospel, even the relatively inadequate religion that he has will be taken from him.”

Consider finally Saying 66.

Saying 66: Jesus said, “Show me the stone that the builders rejected: that is the cornerstone.”

“Show me” in this saying serves a similar purpose as

does “and see” in Saying 10. That is, the gospel is what the reader is being shown as he reads this saying in the gospel. The suggested interpretation of the saying is

Jesus said, “Show me the gospel that the builders of traditional Christianity rejected: that is the cornerstone of new Christianity.”

(See the note regarding this interpretation which is given in Chapter 3 below.)

Although this discussion is not intended as a comprehensive interpretation of the Gospel of Thomas, the reader who is interested in this very important Saying 66 is referred to

Is 28:16: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Note that relating Is 28:16 to Saying 66 permits us to interpret the reference to “the report” in the context of Is 28:16, at Is 28:19, as a reference to the gospel of Jesus. (Observe also that without Saying 66 the meaning of “the report” in Is 28:19 is completely mysterious.) Note also that the reference to the precious corner stone in Is 28:16 suggests the relevance of

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal,

which together with the above interpretation of Saying 66 suggests that the gospel of Jesus will provide the light of new Jerusalem. (See Is 60:19, Rev 7:16

and Rev 21:23.) The reference to the high mountain in Rev 21:10 together with

Saying 32: Jesus said, “A city built on a high hill and fortified cannot fall, nor can it be hidden,”

suggests that the city referred to in Saying 32 is new Jerusalem, and that new Jerusalem, fortified by the gospel of Jesus, cannot fall and will be manifest to all humankind.

2

For Whom is the Gospel Written?

It has generally been assumed by all students of the Gospel of Thomas, even those who question the legitimacy of its claimed origin, that the sayings therein are to be interpreted as having been directed to the original disciples of the historical Jesus - people who lived 2000 years ago. Close inspection of the sayings reveals however that this is not the case. Consider for example Saying 3.

Saying 3: Jesus said, “If your leaders say to you, ‘Behold, the kingdom is in heaven,’ then the birds of heaven will precede you. If they say to you, ‘It is in the sea,’ then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside you and it is outside you. When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you dwell in poverty, and you are the poverty.”

Jesus speaks in this saying to his audience of “your leaders.” Since the subject of their unhelpful advice - the kingdom - is a spiritual subject, Jesus is speaking to his audience of their spiritual leaders. But Jesus was himself the spiritual leader of the original disciples. So he is not speaking to them.

Again, consider Saying 43.

Saying 43: His disciples said to him, “Who are you that you say these things to us?”

“You do not understand who I am from what I say unto you. Rather, you have become like the Judeans, for they love the tree but hate its fruit, and they love the fruit but hate the tree.”

Jesus speaks here to his audience of “the Judeans” in a way which clearly indicates that he distinguishes the members of his audience from the Judeans. But his original disciples were all Judeans. So he is not

speaking to them.

To whom is he speaking? He could not have written it for people who could not understand the interpretation of Saying 7 as

Blessed is the Godless world that Jesus will consume, so that the Godless world will become humanized. And cursed is Judas whom the Godless world will consume, and the Godless world will become humanized,

which was discussed in Chapter 4 of Part 2. This interpretation is only comprehensible when we understand how Proposition 1 is possible - that is, when we understand that the person who was crucified was Judas, while Jesus survived to write the Gospel of Thomas. And this insight is of critical importance in understanding this gospel, not only in that it permits us to understand the reasonableness of Propositions 1 and 2 and some of the insights flowing there-

from which are noted above in Chapter 1, but also, most obviously, as in the following examples.

Saying 40: Jesus said, “A grapevine has been planted apart from the Father, but, being unsound, it will be pulled up by its root and destroyed.”

This saying is telling us that traditional Christianity, being based (by Paul) on a worldly falsehood (the falsehood of a crucified Jesus), being unsound, will be pulled up by its root and destroyed.

Consider in this regard Saying 57.

Saying 57: Jesus said, “The Father’s kingdom is like a person who has good seed. His enemy came during the night and sowed weeds among the good seed. The person did not let the workers pull up the weeds, but said to them, ‘No, otherwise you might go to pull up the weeds and pull up the wheat along with them.’ For on the day of the harvest the weeds

will be conspicuous, and will be pulled up and burned.”

Jesus is telling us here that traditional Christianity has been tolerated by God for 2000 years because of the beneficial effect which it has had on sincere Christians, notwithstanding that it has been exploited shamelessly by worldly people in the pursuit of their own worldly personal interests,. But on the day of the harvest (see the reference to “when the crop ripened” in Saying 21) those phony Christians who will vigorously and publicly attempt to suppress the truth in promotion of the continuation of their self-serving falsehoods will be conspicuous and will be pulled up and destroyed along with, according to Saying 40, their worldly religion.

Consider further Saying 92.

Saying 92: Jesus said, “Seek and you will find. In the past, however, I did not tell you the things about

which you asked me then. Now I am willing to tell them, but you are not seeking them.”

Jesus is telling us in this saying that his spiritual message, which sincere Christians have always wanted to know, is in this gospel, but the reader, knowing that Jesus was not crucified, may no longer be seeking to know this message.

And consider Saying 96.

Saying 96: Jesus said, “The Father’s kingdom is like a woman. She took a little leaven, hid it in dough, and made it into large loaves of bread. Anyone here with two ears had better listen!”

Jesus is telling us here that there is an impurity (the crucifixion-resurrection illusion) at the heart of traditional Christianity. Because of this impurity traditional Christianity has grown into the largest religion in the world. But now that the loaves have

grown large they are ready for the fire of the oven (see Mal 4:1), which will remove the impurity.

Also of relevance is Saying 102.

Saying 102: Jesus said, “Damn the pharisees! They are like a dog sleeping in the cattle manger: the dog neither eats nor lets the cattle eat.”

Jesus is telling us here that the pharisees (that is, the hypocrites) among the leadership of traditional Christianity, spiritually asleep and accustomed to using Christianity for their worldly personal benefit, will persist in rejecting or ignoring the gospel of Jesus, notwithstanding that its understanding will permit its sincere students to enter the kingdom of God. (See in this regard

Is 56:10-12: His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they

are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.)

It is helpful to see in this regard Saying 103.

Saying 103: Jesus said, “Blessed is he who knows where the thieves are going to attack, so that he may arise, gather his kingdom, and gird his loins from the beginning before they come in.”

Jesus is telling us here that it is a blessing for one to know how those who will rob the hypocritical and self-serving professional Christian clergy of their livelihood are going to do so (by means of what we have learned in Part 2), so that one may use the spiritual message of the gospel of Jesus to “arise” (see

“arisen” in Saying 17), gather his kingdom, and gird his loins (see “gird his loins” in Saying 21) from the beginning (see the references to “the beginning” in Saying 18) before they arrive. That is, those who understand the spiritual message of the gospel of Jesus will understand that the worldly circumstances of his physical death are irrelevant thereto. (It is possible that some leaders of traditional Christianity will have sufficient integrity to be able to benefit from this saying. Such Christian leaders (which this gospel does not suggest will be great in number) can be very useful to God in introducing their flocks to the gospel of Jesus. Sayings 68 and 69 would be of particular relevance to such true servants of God.)

Consider finally Saying 104.

Saying 104: They said to Jesus, “Come, let us pray today, and let us fast.”

Jesus said, “What sin have I committed, or how have I been undone? Rather, when the bridegroom

leaves the bridal chamber, then let people fast and pray.”

Jesus is saying here, in response to a request by his followers for fasting and prayer, that he has committed no sin and has not been undone as a spiritual authority by the revelation of the crucifixion-resurrection illusion. We can therefore conclude that this is why in this saying his followers are calling “today” for fasting and prayer.

In summary, close inspection of this gospel reveals that the sayings thereof are not directed to people who lived 2000 years ago, but to sincere followers or would-be followers of Jesus who are able to understand Part 2. We express this insight as a proposition:

Proposition 3: The sayings of the Gospel of Thomas are directed to us.

3

Scriptural Allusions within the Gospel

We saw near the beginning of Chapter 1 that

Saying 5: Jesus said, “Know what is before your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed,”

can be interpreted as

Jesus said, “Know this gospel, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed.”

Further insight into the saying is obtained by reading it in conjunction with

Rev 2:17: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches; to him that over-

cometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

We can now understand that the hidden manna referred to in Rev 2:17 is the hidden meaning of the sayings of the gospel of Jesus. This verse appears to be telling us that one who can overcome the spiritual test which God has set specifically for Christians (see in this regard Is 28:27-8) and can accept that the Gospel of Thomas is the gospel of Jesus (who is, in no small measure because of his gospel, the Christ prophesied by Is 61:1 - see the discussion of Saying 21 in the next chapter) will be given the opportunity to eat of this hidden manna - that is, to absorb the hidden meaning of the sayings thereof.

Recall also that near the end of Chapter 1 our understanding of Saying 66 and of Saying 32 was improved considerably by reading these sayings in conjunction with Is 28:16 and with Rev 21:10-11.

These examples lead to the insight that finding a reference or references in holy scripture will most likely be helpful in understanding at least some of the other sayings of this gospel. The term “holy scripture” as used here includes not only that portion thereof with which the historical Jesus was plausibly familiar (the Old Testament and his words and teachings recorded in the four canonical gospels) but also the book of Revelation. This may be a surprise to those who, having read and understood Part 2, have concluded (if they had not previously believed) that the historical Jesus did not perform supernatural feats, in the sense that he did nothing which is in violation of the laws of the natural sciences. But that the book of Revelation is useful in understanding the Gospel of Thomas is not in violation of these laws, although these laws do not help us to understand how such a thing is possible.

There are many instances of the usefulness of the insight expressed above in understanding the gospel.

A few examples are indicated below.

Consider Saying 23.

Saying 23: Jesus said, “I shall choose you, one from a thousand and two from ten thousand, and they will stand to their feet as a single one.”

If we read this saying in conjunction with

Matt 24:31: And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other,

it appears that the “chosen” referred to in Saying 23 are those “elect” (that is, those chosen) who will have ears to hear in this saying the great sound of the trumpet referred to in Matt 24:31.

There are many implicit allusions to the chosen in the other sayings of the gospel. There are also many

other references to the chosen in the Bible. These include Psa 33:12, Psa 50:5, Psa 65:4-5, Psa 91, Psa 97:8-12, Psa 107: 3,9, Psa 149, Is 11:12, Is 26:19-21, Is 41:8-16, Is 43:1-12,20-21, Is 56:1-8, Is 57:2, Is 65:8-10,13-24, Is 66:5-14,19-22, Jer 31:33, Jer 46:27, Ezek 9:4, Ezek 36:12,24-28, Ezek 37, Hos 14:9, Amos 9:9,14-15, Hag 2:7-9, Zech 2, Mal 3:3,16-18, Mal 4:2-3, Matt 20:16, Mark 13:20,27, Luke 13:29, Luke 20:36, Rev 3:12, Rev 6:9-11, Rev 7, Rev 12, Rev 14:1-5, Rev 17:14, Rev 19:14, Rev 20:4 and Rev 21:7. (Study of these references will help the reader to understand what is prophesied concerning the special relationship with God which the chosen will enjoy and their influence in the future on human society. An important example is Psa 149:8, which tells us that the chosen will “bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.” See in this regard Rev 2:26-27. Insight into how such a thing may be possible can be acquired by considering Saying 15 in conjunction with Is 49:23 and Is 60:14 (when we have interpreted “It is motion

and rest” at the end of Saying 50 as the grammatical skeleton of “It is motion of the lips and rest of the soul,” which will suggest, if correct, that the chosen referred to in Saying 50 will serve as oracles of God, the “one who was not born of woman” referred to in Saying 15. Note that this interpretation clarifies considerably the meaning of “as a single one” at the end of the saying.) See also in this regard Psa 102:16, Is 43:12, Is 51:16, Is 52:6, Is 52:8, Is 58:13, Is 59:21 and Is 66:5-6. Sayings 74, 78 and 83 will be found to be relevant to this subject.)

It is also important to note in trying to interpret this gospel that in Rev 14:3 listed above it is prophesied that the chosen will sing “a new song.” (See also in this regard Is 42:10.) In view of

Mark 24:35: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away,

and similar verses at Mark 13:31 and Luke 21:33,

we may reasonably conclude that the chosen will find new meaning in the words of Jesus which are reported in the canonical gospels. An illustrative example of this concerns Saying 66.

Saying 66: Jesus said, “Show me the stone that the builders rejected: That is the cornerstone.”

In Chapter 1 above this saying is interpreted as

Jesus said, “Show me the gospel that the builders of traditional Christianity rejected: That is the cornerstone of new Christianity.”

In Matt 21:42, Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17 however, Jesus cites “the stone which the builders rejected, (the same) is become the head of the corner,” from the scriptural source

Psa 118:22: The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner,

in contexts which suggest to traditional Christians that Jesus is interpreting “stone” in Psa 118:22 as himself (rather than his gospel).

Although it is premature to discuss the matter here at length it will eventually become clear that the gospel of Jesus is the sealed book of Christianity which is the subject of Chapter 6 (and a few other chapters) of the book of Revelation. (Note that Propositions 1-3 above, which were derived from close consideration of Sayings 1-3, express insights which appear to constitute the opening of the first three seals.) It will also eventually become clear I think that the gospel of Jesus will also be recognized as the sealed book of Judaism. (See the reference thereto at Is 29:11. See also the context of this reference through “And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness” at Is 29:18 and concluding with “And they that murmured shall learn doctrine” at the end of Is 29.) It will also be-

come clear in time I believe that the gospel of Jesus is the sealed book of Islam which in the 83rd chapter of the Quran is called Illiyun. As is stated therein (but in Arabic of course), from this sealed book the righteous will be given pure nectar to drink, whose very dregs are musk, tempered with the waters of Tasnim, a spring at which the favored will refresh themselves. (See in regard to the reference to Tasnim:

Saying 108: Jesus said, “He who drinks from my mouth will become like me. I myself will become that person, and the hidden things will be revealed to that one.”

See also the reference to “the bubbling spring” in Saying 13. These references in the gospel suggest that in time Muslims will understand that Tasnim is the mouth of Jesus.)

The reader who is familiar with the Quran will recall that “the favored” noted above are also noted at

the very beginning of the Quran, in the Exordium:

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, Lord of Creation, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Judgment.

You alone we worship, and to you alone we turn for help. Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom you have favored, not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.

The (absolutely astounding) implication of all of this is that in the future Christians, Jews and Muslims will have the same source of spiritual inspiration, and that this source will be the gospel of Jesus.

The reader who is Christian will have no difficulty in accepting that the chosen referred to above will be chosen by Jesus, but this will be a radical notion to the reader who is Jewish. And yet this is implied by Ezek 9:4-7. For the man clothed in linen with the writer's inkhorn by his side noted in Ezek 9:2 can

now be recognized by both Jews and Christians as Jesus. (We have not thought of Jesus, prior to Proposition 1, as a writer, but this impediment to our understanding of holy scripture has now been removed.) In Ezek 9:4 this man is charged by God to “set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.” (“In the midst thereof” means literally in Ezek 9:4 “in the midst of Jerusalem,” but we can interpret this text within the context of a developed interpretation of the gospel as “in that part of human society which is purportedly subject to the moral influence of Judaism, Christianity and/or Islam.”) In the remainder of Ezek 9 it is written that those without the mark will be slain without pity. The reader who is well-versed in the Bible will be reminded by this passage of Rev 3:12, Rev 7:1-3 and of Rev 14:1. Our understanding of these passages is improved when we understand that the chosen will be chosen by Jesus as they come to know his gospel (and as they employ the wisdom required to choose

the large fish noted in Saying 8 and the prudence required to purchase the pearl noted in Saying 76. See in this regard Hos 14:9.) (Also see John 15:16 for insight regarding the choice referred to in Saying 8.) The text “one from a thousand and two from ten thousand” in Saying 23 suggests the relevance of Deut 32:30 and of Psa 91:7.

“And they will stand to their feet” suggests the relevance of:

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.
--Ezek 37:10

It will be useful for the student to read or review the context of this passage including at least Ezek 37:1-14. A few observations can be made here:

a. The reference to the four winds (which is associated with the chosen in many of the references noted

above) at Ezek 37:9 is a further suggestion that the chosen will constitute the great army of Ezek 37. (“O Lord God, thou knowest,” in Ezek 37:3 considered in conjunction with “Sir, thou knowest,” in Rev 7:14 is another such suggestion);

b. Our study of Saying 84 will also help us to understand that the striking description in Ezek 37 of the resurrection from dry bones of the great army described therein is a literal description by Ezekiel of a vision, received by him from God, which augurs an astounding spiritual event of the future. It should not be interpreted literally as a real world description. The resurrection of the chosen from the dust which is described in Ezek 37 is a spiritual resurrection and not a physical resurrection. This resurrection is also the subject of Is 66:8 et seq.

c. The reference to the “shaking” in Ezek 37:7 suggests that the resurrection referred to above will occur immediately after the calamity alluded to in the last sentence of Saying 28,

“When they shake off their wine, then they will repent,”

and referred to at Is 2:19,21, Is 13:13, Is 17:6, Is 24:13,18,20, Ezek 38:20, Joel 3:16, Zech 2:9 and Rev 16:18.

The employment of “stand to their feet” in this saying suggests the relevance in holy scripture of more than Ezek 37:10. See for example Psa 1:5, Psa 94:15-16, Psa 147:17, Is 32:8, Is 40:8, Is 57:2, Dan 2:44, Zech 3:7, Mal 3:2, Mark 9:1, Luke 21:36 and Rev 6:17. See also in this gospel in particular Saying 28. (And see also Sayings 16, 18 and 50.) See further:

And the trumpet shall be blown, so that all those that are in the heavens and all those that are in the earth shall swoon, except such as Allah please; then it shall be blown again, then lo! they shall stand up awaiting.

—Quran 39:68

Consider finally Saying 72.

Saying 72: A man said to him, “Speak to my brothers so that they may divide my father’s possessions with me.” He said to him, “Man, who made me a divider?” He turned to his disciples and said to them, “I am not a divider, am I?”

If we read this saying in conjunction with

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM...this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

—from Exodus 3:14-15

we are able to complete the insight which Jesus began to express 2000 years ago as follows:

“I am not a divider, am I? I am. That I am.”

4

Spiritual Insight and Liberation

Aside from what the pensive reader may be able to conclude from what is written above, an introduction to the spiritual content of the gospel can usefully begin with a look at Saying 4.

Saying 4: Jesus said, “The person old in days will not hesitate to ask a little child seven days old about the place of life, and that person will live. For many of the first will be last, and will become a single one.”

The place of life of the child is a spiritual place. For on the seventh day (note the allusion to early Genesis) the child does not know that it lives in any physical place. (See Saying 86.) For the child has not yet become worldly-self-conscious. As early Genesis expresses the matter concerning Adam:

Gen 2:25: And they were both naked, the man and

his wife, and were not ashamed.

As a philosopher of mathematical logic might express the matter, the child seven days old has not yet posited the existence of a worldly personal self as a component of the conceptual representation (or theory, or model) of creation which it will know as the real world. To continue in the language of early Genesis, when Adam in the garden of Eden ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thereby becoming worldly-self-conscious (see Gen 3:10), he became able to choose, in his subsequent pursuit of his worldly, personal and pretty much selfish objectives, whether to adhere to or to depart from the will of God. But in adopting a worldly identity Adam became mortal. God then required him to leave the garden of Eden and the tree of life therein (see Gen 3:22-23) and he died. (See Gen 2:17 and Gen 3:17-19.)

“And that person will live” in this saying suggests that the older person (who represents the sincere stu-

dent of the gospel) will nevertheless find a way to escape the mortal penalty rendered upon Adam. Many sayings of this gospel, beginning with Saying 1, relate to this subject. In understanding the spiritual message of this gospel it is quite helpful to recognize that the notion of being a real world entity is a logical absurdity. That is, it is not logically possible for one to exist as an element of and therefore within a conceptual model - albeit for many purposes a useful model - which is itself a product of one's own intellect. (That the real world which you know is a conceptual product of the human intellect will not surprise neuroscientists. For it is quite plausible to them that everything which you consider to exist within the real world is somehow physically represented within or in conjunction with your central nervous system.)

(Those readers who are familiar with quantum physics will I think be pleased to understand that much of the mystery relating to this subject disap-

appears when we understand that the real world is a conceptual model rather than something which is too “objective” to be so considered. For example, it becomes natural when in quantum mechanics an “observation” (more precisely, a measurement which makes a particular quantum state of, let us say, a particular elementary particle, observable) produces the result that the observable quantum state is a feature of the real world, to think of the “collapse of the probability wave function” (of the Copenhagen interpretation) simply as a discrete updating of the model so as to include that observable quantum state of the particle. As another example, the primary intuitive difficulty with the Many Worlds approach is that to interpret its mathematics we are required to posit the existence of many worlds. But this is also not particularly troubling when we understand that we are simply positing the existence of many conceptual representations of creation.)

The logical error which is implicit in the notion of

existing in the real world is of a kind which symbolic logicians and mathematicians who specialize in the fundamentals of their discipline call a “categorical mistake.” A categorical mistake is made when a thing of a particular logical category is treated or interpreted as a thing of a different logical category.

(For example, it is far better for a math instructor who is showing a student how to set up the solution to a simple algebra problem to begin by saying “Let x represent the unknown quantity” rather than to say “Let x be the unknown quantity.” Otherwise the student, who already knows that x is a letter of the Roman alphabet, may acquire the impression that the unknown quantity is somehow a letter of the Roman alphabet. This would be a categorical mistake.)

There are many ways by which one may be represented within the real world model of creation which is comprehensible to the human intellect - for example as a physical body, or as a consumer with particular demographic characteristics, or as a convicted felon, and so forth - but one is, strictly speaking,

none of these things.

Notwithstanding what is written above the mindset of being (rather than simply being represented as) a real world entity is not easily transcended. To the beginning student of the gospel this erroneous conception of our own true nature may appear to be an inescapable consequence of human consciousness.

It can become inescapable. We will learn from study of the gospel that what we are spiritually is determined by our spiritual characteristics - in particular our self-image and the associated values and attitudes. And if we become satisfied with a life conditioned by worldly attitudes and justified by worldly values and we become unwilling (and therefore unable) to break free from the delusion, then in a spiritual sense illusion will become reality. That is, we will lose contact with our own true nature and effectively become what we think we are, real world entities. (Recall the last sentence of Saying 3. Note also that in Gen 3:19 God tells Adam, after Adam has assumed a worldly identity, not simply that Adam

thinks he is dust but rather that he is dust, and will return to dust.) But the interested reader can learn better. Much of this gospel is about how to learn better and about the ramifications of our liberation from the conceptual prison of a worldly identity. Consider for example Saying 11.

Saying 11: Jesus said, “This sky will pass away and that (sky) which is above it will pass away, and those who are dead they live not, and those who live they will not die. During the days when you (pl) were eating he who is dead you were making him he who lives; when you (pl) should come to be in the light, what is it that you will do? On the day when you (pl) were one you made the two; when, however, you should come to be two, what is it that you will do?”

Comment 1: The above is a more direct translation from the Coptic than are some extant translations. For example, “those who are dead” rather than “the dead” is used, and “he who is dead” rather than

“what is dead” is used, “when you should come to be in the light” rather than “when you are in the light” is used, and “you made the two” rather than “you became two” is used.

Comment 2: Our understanding of this saying is improved considerably by reading it in conjunction with John 6.

Comment 3: “This sky will pass away and that (sky) which is above it will pass away” is a straightforward expression of physical fact. Neither the atmosphere above us nor the stars in the firmament above it will always be as they are now. (See Quran 6:75-79.) The point is that everything in the real world which is familiar to ordinary people - even those things which we are accustomed to think of as most permanent - will perish. Consider:

“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him

hath God the Father sealed.”

--John 6:27

Comment 4: “And those who are dead, they live not, and those who live they will not die” in this saying suggests, in conjunction with the reference of the above comment, the relevance of:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

--John 6:47-51

We can therefore interpret “those who are dead” in this saying as the ancestors of the members of the audience to which Jesus spoke as recorded in the

above passage from John 6, the ancestors who, subject to the curse of Adam (see Saying 4), believed that they were real world entities and hence were satisfied with worldly sustenance. For in believing that they were real world entities and relying thereupon they lost touch with their own true nature, their spiritual nature. In so doing they died spiritually and thereby effectively became what they imagined themselves to be. (Recall Sayings 3 and 4, see Gen 3:19 and John 3:6 and also see Sayings 60 and 63.) “And those who live they will not die” are those who have eaten of the “living bread which came down from heaven” which Jesus, in speaking as recorded above to his audience of that historical time and place as well as thereafter to traditional Christians, identifies as himself.

Comment 5: “During the days you were eating he who is dead you were making him he who lives” can be interpreted as “When you were traditional Christians you practiced traditional communion, eating (ritually) the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus,

whom you thought of as a historical person who had died (in a worldly sense). This ritual, you were encouraged to feel, enabled Jesus, who had died to the world, to come alive in yourselves.” This is the interpretation which traditional Christianity gives to “the living bread” referenced above in John 6:47-51.

Comment 6: “When you should come to be in the light, what is it that you will do?” asks the question “As you begin to understand your own true nature from the study of this gospel, and as you come to understand that you are not a real world entity composed of flesh and blood but are of the same nature as the source of all life (see in this regard for example Sayings 24 (discussed below), 50, 61 and 77, with “light” interpreted as “life” (more precisely “sentient life” or “awareness,” and even more precisely, “the awareness which infused the historical Jesus)), how will you practice communion in accordance with our interpretation (near the beginning of Chapter 3) of the “hidden manna” referenced in Rev 2:17 as the hidden meaning of the sayings of the

gospel of Jesus?” I believe that the answer is clear. It is clear that the communion sacrament of traditional Christianity has been a historical prologue, for traditional Christians, of the true communion with Jesus which is now possible - to receive that which is spiritual and which lives (see for example

John 6:63: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.)

rather than that which is worldly and is dead - that is, to absorb the meaning of the sayings of his gospel and to be enabled thereby to receive the blessing which is promised to the participants of traditional communion, (See for example Sayings 37 and 108. See also Quran 5:114.) The remainder of this saying elaborates on this subject.

Comment 7: “On the day when you (pl) were one you made the two” is a reference to the circumstance that each of us, on the first day of our life in

the real world (see Saying 4), created in our own mind a worldly personal self as a component of that newly created world, and thenceforth conceptually superimposed that worldly entity upon (and subsequently conditioned) the identity which we manifested prior to that intellectual process - our own original identity. (See Gen 1:27. Also see John 17:5. Sayings 18, 19, 22, 24 (discussed below), 25, 26, 50 and 70 are also relevant. Some students may prefer “true self” to “original identity” as a verbal representation of what one was before one created the real world as a conceptual model of creation and placed (and thereby confined) oneself therein.)

Comment 8: “When, however, you (pl) should come to be two, what is it that you will do?” asks the question “When you have entered the world as each of you has conceptually done, as an entity distinct, and even categorically distinct, from your original identity (and from the source of your own life), and with the freedom to pursue worldly agendas, how will you avoid the curse of Adam?” The preceding part

of this saying suggests that to do so and to receive the promised blessing one must live from the eternal and living source of one's own being (see John 6:57 together with Saying 108 and also see for further elucidation Sayings 22, 24, 27, 28, 50, 59 and 111) rather than trust in and rely upon some transitory worldly entity which (along with every other worldly entity) is an essentially dead product of one's own intellect. (See Sayings 56, 60 and 80. Also see Is 57:13. Again see Quran 6:75-79 and see also Quran 25:58 and Quran 28:88.) This should sound familiar as it is an updated expression of the many exhortations of the prophets to worship the true God and to not worship some false god or graven image which is actually dead and which is simply the work of your own hands. The particular application of this general attitude which is suggested here by "what is it that you will do" is (expressed in traditional terms) that one should live from (and for) God rather than from (and for) a worldly identity, persona and/or ego. For submitting the "self" to the will of God

will allow us to re-acquire our original identity or true self as, in spiritual union with God (see for example John 10:30), we achieve liberation from the erroneous notion of a worldly identity. (See for example John 8:28-29.) And then, in the language of early Genesis, God will spare us the disposition of Adam which is recorded in Gen 3:17-19 and in Gen 3:22-24.

Comment 9: Note that our improved understanding (discussed in Comment 6 above) of John 6:47-51 given above in Comment 4 now gives Christians as well as Jews and Muslims (and in time all of humankind, as is suggested by Is 66:23) an improved understanding of what it means to “believe in” Jesus and why it is important to do so. Now and henceforth to believe in Jesus will be to believe that the meaning of his gospel is worth absorbing. Consider:

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

--John 6:35

Let us now consider Saying 24.

Saying 24: His disciples said, “Show us the place where you are, for we must seek after it.”

He said to them, “Let whoever has ears listen. There is light within a person of light, and he becomes light to the whole world. If he doesn’t become light, there is darkness.”

Comment 1: The disciples referred to above say that they “must seek after” the place where Jesus is (spiritually, of course). The contemporary student of this gospel is specifically encouraged thereby to do so. (See Sayings 90 and 92.) Some traditional Christians will find this quite a new endeavor, as they have not been encouraged by their worldly religious leaders to do this. (Recall Saying 3 and see the discussion below of Sayings 21 and 39.)

Comment 2: The answer of Jesus, “There is light within a person of light, and he becomes light to the whole world. If he doesn’t become light, there is darkness” suggests the relevance of:

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
--John 8:12

One implication here is the quite practical insight that those who follow Jesus will be immune from the spiritual affliction that life in a Godless and indifferent universe seems meaningless and pointless. But John 8:12 considered in conjunction with this saying also suggests that if we follow Jesus we will have the light of life - that is, the sentience, or the awareness - which infuses him. (See for example Sayings 61 and 108.) But there is more in his answer given here than this. Also suggested is the relevance of:

In him (that is, in God) was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

--John 1:4-5

That is, Jesus is also telling us that we will also understand that this light of life - or this awareness - is not, strictly speaking, of worldly origin. Expressed in contemporary terms, it is not a property of the atoms, molecules and cells which constitute your physical body. Rather (expressed in the terms of traditional Christianity), it derives from God and is a characteristic of God. What you think of as “your” life is in fact an emanation of God. And so he is suggesting in John 8:12, cited above, that those who follow him will understand and hence realize this. This is consistent with the circumstance that Jesus speaks of God as the living Father. (Again see Saying 61. Also see Sayings 29, 37, 50, 52, 72, 77 and 90, and see again Gen 1:27. See also Quran 3:2.)

Comment 3: Our appreciation of the reasonableness

of the point made above is improved when we consider that the physical model of creation does not imply the existence of a sentient human brain. Nor can it ever yield such an implication, no matter how much our neuroscientists can ever learn about how the human central nervous system works. For the notion of a sentient brain is a logical impossibility - a categorical error. It is the spiritual entity represented by a brain in our physical real world model, and not the brain itself, which is sentient.

Consider as another example Saying 97.

Saying 97: Jesus said, “The kingdom of the Father is like a woman carrying a jar full of meal. While she was walking on a distant road the handle of the jar broke and the meal emptied out after her on the road. She did not know it. She did not realize that there was a problem. When she arrived at her house she put the jar down and discovered that it was empty.”

The jar is discovered to be empty when the god of the worldly self vanishes. That is, the jar is found to be empty when the apparent and familiar reality of a worldly identity, or worldly self somehow residing in one's head, is suddenly dispelled as an illusion. This insight, the essential point of Rinzai Zen Buddhism, is called satori, or the experience of kensho, which translates into English as “seeing into one's true nature.” Although the point of Saying 97 is perfectly clear to serious students of Zen Buddhism this subject is beyond the grasp of the religious authorities of traditional Christianity. (Recall the commentary under Saying 102 in Chapter 2.)

Jesus said, “If a blind person leads a blind person, both of them will fall into a hole.”

—Saying 34

The “hole” referred to in Saying 34 is the illusion of a worldly identity. This is the point of the last sentence of Saying 3: “But if you do not know yourselves, then you dwell in poverty, and you are the

poverty.” (It is also in part what Jesus is speaking of in John 8:23 when he tells a group of Jews, “Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.”) This interpretation of “hole” is also helpful in understanding:

But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses; they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

—Is 42:22

See also in this regard Micah 7:17.

These insights lead rather naturally to the last subject of this chapter. Consider:

Saying 21: Mary said to Jesus, “What are your disciples like?”

He said, “They are like little children living in a field which is not theirs. When the owners of the field come they will say, ‘Give our field back to us.’ They

strip naked in the presence of the owners of the field in order to give back the field to them and they give the field to them. For this reason I say, if the owner of a house knows that a thief is coming, he will be on guard before the thief arrives and will not permit the thief to burrow into the house of his kingdom and steal his possessions.

As for you (pl), then, keep watch from the beginning of the world. Gird your loins in a great power, so that the thieves do not discover a path which leads to you, for they will discover the help which you look outward for. Let there be among you a person who understands. When the crop ripened, that one came quickly with sickle in hand and harvested it. Whoever has ears to hear should hear.”

“Keep watch from the beginning of the world” above is a more direct translation from the Coptic than the usual “be on guard against the world.” Also “in a great power” above is a more direct translation from the Coptic than the usual “with great strength.” Finally, “for they will discover the help which you

look outward for” above is a more direct translation from the Coptic than the usual “for the trouble which you expect will come,” “for the advantage for which you look they will find,” or variations thereof.

The first sentence of this saying suggests that the disciples referred to at the beginning of the saying are those who were known to Mary Magdalene - that is, the original disciples of the historical Jesus. Jesus responds to Mary’s question by describing his original disciples as “like little children living in a field which is not theirs.” That is, they are naive and do not understand that the world in which they live belongs to worldly people with worldly priorities. The religion which they will found will be part of this world. Jesus is warning that this will lead to trouble. He was correct. The religion which they founded became a political plum for worldly people with worldly objectives. The owners of the field had nearly recovered it completely by 325 C.E. when the Roman emperor Constantine convened and presided over the First Council of Nicaea for the purpose of

helping the bishops, the political leaders of Christianity, to find a single sheet of music from which to sing. (It was in Constantine's political interest that the leaders of the large population of Christians which he courted cease from publicly discrediting each other.) The song which they agreed to sing is now known as the Nicene Creed (more precisely, the original version thereof). The Nicene Creed is primarily a succinct Christology (that is, a statement of the nature and the person of Jesus). The bishops supposed, apparently without reflection thereupon, that such a thing as a Christology from a worldly perspective was possible. (Such a thing is neither possible nor necessary. See Sayings 13 and 91 respectively.) It established the criterion of who would thenceforth be considered to be a true follower of Christ and who would not in the form of an easily recited statement of "belief." The meaning of the Nicene Creed has never been clear to anyone. (Its emphasis on belief rather than understanding reveals that this includes the bishops who adopted it.)

Thenceforth the only legitimate Christians in the eyes of the Church would be people who were willing to publicly profess their belief in something which they didn't actually understand. For the Nicene Creed was not in truth a test of belief but rather of ideological compliance. Although it ignores the message of Jesus (as set forth, for example, in the sermon on the mount at Matt 5-7) it did serve the purpose of the bishops, which was the consolidation of their own authority. In doing so it facilitated the principle that Christians need not ask God for help with spiritual questions. Such questions could thenceforth be referred to bureaucrats. The spiritual heirs of the original disciples, sincere followers or would-be followers of Jesus, who refused to accept this and other debasements of their religion by worldly people with worldly priorities were publicly discredited and required to divest themselves of their worldly identity as Christians by application of the label "heretic" and by public excommunication. In 326 C.E. Constantine gave his bishops authority to

hunt down and destroy the books of all heretics. One of these books was the gospel of Jesus, and all but one copy thereof were thereby destroyed.

The fifth sentence of this saying, “For this reason I say, if the owner of a house knows that a thief is coming, he will be on guard before the thief arrives and will not permit the thief to burrow into the house of his kingdom and steal his possessions,” connects the first part of the saying with the latter part. When read at this point in human history (the time of this writing) it summarizes on the one hand that a great crisis of faith has befallen sincere followers of Jesus in the past because of the worldly nature of traditional Christianity. But it is also a prelude to the latter part of the saying which portends another spiritual crisis (see for example Saying 16 in conjunction with Is 66:15-16), but with a strikingly different outcome (see for example Saying 68 in conjunction with Is 66:5-6), which has just begun. “As for you then,” indicates that Jesus is speaking here directly

to us rather than to either Mary or his original disciples. “Keep watch from the beginning of the world. Gird your loins in a great power, so that the thieves do not discover a path which leads to you, for they will discover the help which you look outward for” is in part a reference to Saying 103, which was discussed above in Chapter 2. It advises us to find within ourselves, using the spiritual message of this gospel, the means to preserve (or perhaps find) our faith in Jesus as the Christ - the Christ who was anointed to preach good news, that is, to deliver a message, as is suggested by Is 61:1 (and by Saying 43), and not a Christ who performed worldly supernatural feats. It cautions us not to look outward to the professional leaders of traditional Christianity for help in this crisis, as most (if not all) of these authorities, bound by worldly considerations - their economic dependence on traditional Christianity and the prerequisite ideological constraints thereof - will be of no help and will be discredited thereby. (As Saying 35 immediately after Saying 34 quoted above

expresses the matter, the hands of the owner of the house will be tied.) It is not difficult to understand why the term “thief” is appropriate to the spiritual forebears of these contemporary authorities, those spiritual forebears who hijacked Christianity in its earliest years, notwithstanding that they were the owners of the field. Regarding the relevance of the term to the current crisis, see Matt 24:43-4 (and Luke 12:39), Rev 3:3 and Rev 16:15. The owner of the house will not know that a thief is coming, and the thief will take back what was previously stolen from him. (See in this regard Saying 100.)

And consider finally:

Saying 39: Jesus said, “The pharisees and the scribes have taken the keys of knowledge and hidden them. They have not entered, and they have not allowed those who wish to enter to do so. As for you, however, be as cunning as serpents and as innocent as doves.”

The “pharisees” referred to in this saying are the contemporary professional leaders of Christianity. (Recall the reference to Saying 102 given above in Chapter 2.) One “key of knowledge” which they have hidden is the Gospel of Thomas, which it is in the worldly personal interest of our contemporary pharisees to suppress. The “scribes” referred to in this saying are the careerists who present themselves to the world as experts in the subject of New Testament Studies. An important “key of knowledge” which they along with our contemporary pharisees have hidden is the answer (along with the key piece of evidence in support thereof) as to how it was possible for the historical Jesus to have written the Gospel of Thomas. The key piece of evidence referred to is the document discovered by Prof. Morton Smith in 1958 which was discussed in Part 2. After Prof. Smith’s death in 1991 this document mysteriously disappeared while in the custody of officials of the Orthodox Church. Accusations against Prof. Smith of forgery of the document which have

been made by miscellaneous scribes and pharisees cannot therefore be immediately refuted by ink tests. (It should be clear however to anyone who has read and understood Part 2 that the document could not possibly have been forged by Prof. Smith, who did not himself understand its significance.)

The verb “entered” in the second sentence of Saying 39 is, like “seek” in the first sentence of Saying 2, a transitive verb which requires an object in the sentence in which it occurs in order to become meaningful. As in the case of the first sentence of Saying 2, the required “grammatical augmentation” is fairly clear from the context - that is:

They have not entered the kingdom, and they have not allowed those who wish to enter to do so.

(Again recall Saying 102.)

“As for you” in this saying has the same meaning as in Saying 21 - that is, Jesus is speaking to us. While

in Saying 21 however we are offered advice in the crisis which has emerged as to how to preserve (or perhaps find) our faith in Jesus as the Christ, in this saying we are offered advice as to how to assist in the furtherance of God's plan to recover Christianity from the pharisees who currently lay claim to its ownership. (Sayings 33 and 73 are also relevant to this subject. A contemporary interpretation of "proclaim from your rooftops" in Saying 33 is "communicate via the internet.") "Be as cunning as serpents and as innocent as doves" appears to be general advice as to how to proceed in making current or former Christians, some of whom wish to enter the kingdom, aware of the gospel of Jesus. For example if one recommends this book for their perusal, telling them that it begins with the little book of Rev 10 and that it ends with an introduction to a gospel of Jesus which has been discovered and which is now recognized as such should get their attention. "Be as innocent as doves" would in this case be a suggestion to say no more than this about the content

of this book. “Be as cunning as serpents” would be a suggestion that such a communication, and communications in general about the gospel of Jesus, be made discreetly in a way which does not attract the attention of the professional church leaders. It will be best if the owner of the house does not know that a thief is coming. (Again recall Saying 21. Also see as examples Saying 37 and again Saying 108.)